THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

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THE SOUTHERN REVIEW is published four times a year by the Louisiana State University Press at Baton Rouge, Louisiana: July, October, January, and April. Subscriptions are $3.00 a year, $5.00 for two years; single copies, seventy-five cents. There is no extra charge for foreign postage.

Manuscripts submitted will not be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage.

Application made for entry as second-class matter at the Post Office at Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Published Quarterly at
THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

VOLUME I ★ AUTUMN, 1935 ★ NUMBER 2

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM YANDELL ELLIOTT, Professor of Government at Harvard University, while a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College, Oxford, wrote his first article on the political thought of Mr. Laski, "The Politics of Mr. H. J. Laski" (*American Political Science Review,* 1924). This article was the first extended analysis of Mr. Laski's views on the state to be published in this country. His own views were set forth in his book, *The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics*. Later books are *The New British Empire* and *International Control in the Non-Ferrous Metals,* of which he was editor. At the annual meeting of the Academy of Political Science this November in New York, Mr. Elliott will discuss "The National Powers Under the Constitution." His recent book, *The Need for Constitutional Reform*, is reviewed by Norman Thomas in this issue.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM in "The Tense of Poetry" continues his series of essays on the nature of poetry which has appeared in recent years in *The Yale Review, The American Review, Harper's* and other magazines. The line of speculation pursued here has engaged the attention in recent years of George Santayana, Paul Elmer More, and I. A. Richards. The antithesis set up between prose and poetry in this essay is developed in more general terms and with a different dialectical approach in the same author's *God Without Thunder,* where the reference is political, economic, and religious as well as aesthetic.

This relation between the aesthetic problem and the more general problems of politics, economics, and religion is argued from a different set of premises and with a different bias by HERBERT READ in "Art and the Revolutionary Attitude." This essay, a summarizing statement of Mr. Read's thinking on this topic, has grown out of his numerous critical studies of literature and painting, such as *Reason and Romanticism, The Sense of Glory,* and *Art Now,* and out of his own practice of poetry, in which, as he remarks in the present essay, his thinking on these general matters is implicit. His last

THE JOURNAL *of* SOUTHERN HISTORY

A quarterly review devoted to the encouragement and promotion of interest and research in the history of the South.

The Journal of Southern History is the official organ of the Southern Historical Association.

The contents of the August, 1935, issue:

Stephen A. Douglas' Efforts for Peace. By George Fort Milton.

Pardon Seekers and Brokers: A Sequel of Appomattox. By J. T. Dorris.

Cotton and Wheat in Anglo-American Trade and Politics, 1846-1852. By Thomas P. Martin.

Edmund Pendleton Gaines and Frontier Problems, 1801-1849. By James W. Silver.

Documents

A Journey Through the South in 1836: Diary of James D. Davidson. Edited by Herbert A. Kellar.

Book Reviews

Historical News and Notices

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For Editorial Correspondence: The Managing Editor, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

For Advertising and Membership in the Association ($3.00 per year, including a subscription to the Journal); Edwin Adams Davis, Editorial Associate and Chairman of the Membership Committee, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

(*Continued from page v*)

volume of poems, *Poems, 1914-1934,* is reviewed in this issue by Howard Baker, who, however, confines his discussion primarily to the matter of the structure of Mr. Read's poetry.

GEORGE MILBURN, whose stories have appeared in numerous magazines and have been collected in *Oklahoma Towns* and *No More Trumpets,* is working on a novel, which will appear shortly. Mr. Milburn has been the holder of a Guggenheim Fellowship for creative writing.

CAROLINE GORDON has contributed stories to the *Hound and Horn, Scribner's,* and other magazines, and has held a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is the author of two novels, *Penhally* and *Aleck Maury.* A third novel by Miss Gordon will be published this winter.

GALE WILHELM, who lives in Berkeley, California, has contributed stories to *Story* and other magazines. Her first novel, *We Too Are Drifting,* which appeared a few months ago, is reviewed in this issue by Randall Jarrell.

JOHN CONNOLLY now holds the James Phelan Fellowship at the University of California, which was formerly held by Howard Baker. "Memento" is Mr. Connolly's second published story.

The Social Frontier, of which GEORGE S. COUNTS is editor, uses the subtitle: "A Journal of Educational Criticism and Reconstruction." Dr. Counts is Professor of Education at Columbia University, and through his teaching and his writing has become an outstanding leader in stimulating social thinking in education. His books include *Secondary Education and Industrialism, The American Road to Culture, A Ford Crosses Soviet Russia;* and he was co-translator of *New Russia's Primer.* His social philosophy of education is well defined in his widely known monograph, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*

"Antony in Behalf of the Play," by KENNETH BURKE is, in one aspect, a parable of political tactics, a study of the psychology of mass appeal. In another aspect, it is an extension of the discussion of the psychological bases of aesthetic form which appeared in Mr. Burke's volume of criticism, *Counterstatement.* Mr. Burke, who was previously a member of the staff of the *Dial,* now holds a Guggenheim Fellowship for the writing of criticism.

THE VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW

announces for October

THE CONSTITUITON AND STATES' RIGHTS
by Charles A. Beard

REVISING ADAM SMITH
by Claudius Murchison

A POEM NOT UNDERSTOOD
by Harris Downey

THE AUSTRIAN POWDERKEG
by Peter Drucker

HIEROGLYPHS AND SIR THOMAS BROWNE
by Gordon Keith Chalmers

THE GREAT KING
by Archibald Rutledge

THE LOTUS IN NEW SPAIN
by Dixon Wecter

A PSYCHOLOGIST LOOKS AT POETRY
by John Crowe Ransom

POETRY BY ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS, CONRAD AIKEN, AND OTHERS

DISCUSSIONS OF NEW BOOKS

The Virginia Quarterly Review

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(*Continued from page vii*)

GEORGE SINCLAIR MITCHELL, who is now with the Rural Resettlement Administration, is a former Rhodes Scholar and a member of the Department of Economics at Columbia University.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP won the Scribner's novelette prize in 1930 with *Many Thousands Gone*. His first novel, *Act of Darkness,* which was published this year, was reviewed by Manson Radford in the summer number of *The Southern Review*. Two years ago his poems appeared under the title of *Now With His Love*. The present group of poems by Mr. Bishop will be included in a volume of his work to be issued this fall by the Alcestis Press. Mr. Bishop's poetic method and objective is discussed in this issue by ALLEN TATE. Mr. Tate's own poem in this issue, "Fragment of a Meditation," is connected on the grounds of material and method with his "Ode to the Confederate Dead," "Aeneas at Washington," "Last Days of Alice," and more especially "Causerie," I and II (*Mr. Pope and Other Poems* and *Poems 1928-31*). "Fragment of a Meditation" will be included in a volume in the Alcestis Press series this fall. Mr. Tate's critical essays under the title, *Essays in Reaction*, will be issued this winter by Scribner's.

NORMAN THOMAS, the leader of the Socialist Party in America and candidate for president in 1928 and 1932, is as critical of Professor William Yandell Elliott's opinions of constitutional change as Mr. Elliott is of Professor Harold J. Laski's reflections on democracy in crisis. He is author of *America's Way Out—a Program for Democracy,* and *As I See It;* his *War—No Glory, No Profit, No Need* is announced for autumn publication.

HOWARD BAKER, who published in the summer issue of *The Southern Review* an essay on the novels of that quarter, has contributed to *The New Republic, Hound and Horn, The American Review,* and other magazines. His first novel, *Orange Valley,* appeared several years ago. He has recently been at work on a second. Mr. Baker, who is himself a poet of distinction, in this issue treats the most significant volumes of verse from the summer lists. Wallace Stevens, whose long poem, "The Old Woman and the Statue," appeared in the summer issue of *The Southern Review,* is the subject of Mr. Baker's most extended comment. Several sections of his discussion of Wallace Stevens and Herbert Read make an interesting comparison with Allen Tate's note on John Peale Bishop's poetry, since both

THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

POETRY PRIZE

The Editors of *The Southern Review* announce a prize of two hundred and fifty dollars, plus the usual publication rates, for the best poem or group of poems to be submitted before May 15, 1936. The award is to be announced in the Summer Issue, 1936. The work submitted must fall within the approximate limits of one hundred and fifty and five hundred lines. Manuscripts entered for the award must be unsigned, and must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope and by a signed statement entering them in the contest. The Editors retain the right to publish in *The Southern Review* at the usual rates any poems entered. The names of the judges for the contest will be announced in the Winter Issue.

NEW VERSE

Edited by GEOFFREY GRIGSON

★ Is the only periodical of its kind in Great Britain and the only reliable guide to the activity of English poets. It has printed poems during the last two years by LOUIS MACNEICE, W. H. AUDEN, CHARLES MADGE, STEPHEN SPENDER, DYLAN THOMAS, BERNARD SPENCER, NORMAN CAMERON, DAVID GASCOYNE, and all the newer English poets of any value.

★ NEW VERSE is not at all tactful. It does not hesitate to call Ezra Pound a bore wherever he is a bore. It is not a clique or political paper, and though its reviews are subsidiary they are independent, selective and sharply expressed.

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A limited supply of copies of the first number of THE SOUTHERN REVIEW is still available, at no advance in price, containing work by the following:

Herbert Agar, Ford Madox Ford, Katherine Anne Porter, Rupert B. Vance, John Peale Bishop, Robert Kent Gooch, Wallace Stevens, Lincoln Fitzell, Donald Davidson, Randall Jarrell, R. P. Blackmur, Raymond Dannenbaum, Robert Penn Warren, G. Marion O'Donnell, Aldous Huxley, Edward Donahoe, Manley O. Hudson, Jesse Stuart, Cleanth Brooks, Jr., Kenneth Burke, Howard Baker, John Donald Wade, John Gould Fletcher, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Manson Radford.

(*Continued from page ix*)

critics are attempting to define the terms in which the problem of form presents itself to contemporary poets. Mr. Baker's discussion of symbolism in the work of Wallace Stevens and William Butler Yeats finds, furthermore, an interesting parallel comment in John Crowe Ransom's "Tense of Poetry."

The fiction of the quarter is treated in this number by RANDALL JARRELL. Poems by Mr. Jarrell appeared in the first number of *The Southern Review*, and he has published poems recently in *The New Republic, The American Review*, and other magazines.

ANDREW LYTLE, whose biography of General Forrest was called by Liddel Hart the best study of the Civil War in the West, here turns to a criticism of the most recent and most thorough account of the war in the East, Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee*. Though Mr. Lytle in this issue continues his interest in the military aspect of the Civil War, he is at present engaged in preparing a study of the philosophical and social backgrounds of that struggle which will appear as a biography of Calhoun. A historical novel by Mr. Lytle will be published this winter.

In "Culture versus Colonialism," published in the summer issue of *The Southern Review,* and in *The People's Choice,* which won the Pulitzer prize for history last year, HERBERT AGAR founds his criticism, constructive and destructive, on an examination of American history. In this issue, he reviews Douglas Jerrold's *England,* a work which reassesses the contemporary English scene by application of the same method of historical investigation. In the winter issue of *The Southern Review*, Mr. Agar will publish a long study of Pareto's *The Mind and Society*. Mr. Agar is at present editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. His new book, *Land of the Free*, appears this fall.

THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

announces for the Winter and Spring issues:

The South and Its Back Country, by H. C. Nixon
Pareto, by Herbert Agar
National Heroes, by Donald Davidson
Black Reconstruction, by Benjamin B. Kendrick
The Function of a Critical Quarterly, by Allen Tate
Mr. Pulitzer's Money, by Andrew Corry
Eugene O'Neill, by Bonamy Dobrée
Erskine Caldwell, by John Donald Wade
Later Poetry of W. B. Yeats, by R. P. Blackmur
Edgar Allan Poe, by Horace Gregory
Metaphysical Poetry and the Ivory Tower, by Cleanth Brooks, Jr.
Vachel Lindsay, by William R. Moses
Poetry of the Winter Quarter, by John Crowe Ransom
Fiction of the Winter Quarter, by Robert Penn Warren
Berdyaev and D'Arcy, by Andrew Corry

FICTION

Cap'm John, by S. S. Field
The Ginsing Gatherers, by Howell Vines
Pale Horse, Pale Rider, by Katherine Anne Porter
Let Nothing You Dismay, by Allen McGinnis
The Washerwoman's Day, by Harriette L. Simpson
Chains, by Elma Godchaux

ARTICLES, FICTION, POETRY, and REVIEWS, by Thomas Wolfe, Harold J. Laski, George Fort Milton, Howard Baker, Yvor Winters, Mark Van Doren, Dixon Wecter, George Milburn, Caroline Gordon, O. W. Riegel, Broadus Mitchell, Robert Kent Gooch, William Yandell Elliott, Stark Young, Cudworth Flint, and Rupert B. Vance.

THE MODERN STATE: KARL MARX AND MR. LASKI

William Yandell Elliott

MR. LASKI is easily the foremost partisan among political theorists in the English-speaking world. There remains some doubt as to his being a political philosopher. He has a talent for publicity, a wide circle of friends, a learning equally wide and various, and remarkable powers as a teacher. His persuasiveness, dialectic power, and his stylistic brilliance have given his views the widest currency in academic circles; and his political activities in the Labour Party have carried those views into the sphere of practice. Literally thousands of American students have enjoyed his genial gossip, full of the most intimate anecdotes of his influence on great men and weighty affairs. Through Felix Frankfurter, his influence on the Roosevelt administration has been far from negligible. His most recent and most philosophical book, *The State in Theory and Practice* (New York: The Viking Press, 1935. $3.00), therefore commands both attention and respect—if only because it represents the most considered attempt on Mr. Laski's part to present a philosophical basis for his own beliefs.

It is his most able work, critically, and his soundest. In attacking what he calls "The Philosophical Theory of State" he has gleaned wisely and well from Hobhouse's rich harvest. He says a vast deal that is learned and apposite. His examples show a most extensive acquaintance with contemporary politics in Europe and America. They are chosen with skill for an *ex parte* argument. But what is his own philosophical position? It is certainly not that of Hobhouse or of Morris Cohen or any of the others whom

he quotes with approval, though the casual reader might think them supporters of Mr. Laski. Indeed, as far as it can be disentangled, Mr. Laski's position seems to be that of a true Marxian, insofar as he has any position at all.

Most students of political institutions would differ with Mr. Laski on a very cardinal point of his philosophy. They have an uneasy certainty that the vast changes which one sees going on today are symptomatic of deeper changes in social institutions connected not only with economic life but also with the family, the school, and the church. At a certain point in the disintegration of these primary social groups, it is true, the political organization of society intervenes and dictates the terms on which all other associations are permitted to exist. But why does this happen? Is it inevitable? What produces the totalitarian state? Can we escape it? After giving the fullest weight, as Mr. Laski does, to the changes in political structure which must accompany the growing interdependence of a highly industrialized society, and to class struggles, there still remain to be considered the changes in human values and in the primary groupings like the school and the family. For these changes of ethical and religious ideals are bound to reflect themselves in political ideas and in the institutions which embody ideas.

There are, in the traditional European thought, two approaches to this problem, both of which stem from Hegel, though they differ as the poles in explaining the processes of history. Neither of them is the only, or, in my opinion, the right, approach to the historical explanation of political and social change. But they offer the convenient simplification of antitheses; and most political history has been written with a distinct bias toward one or the other pole of these philosophical opposites. I refer of course to the Idealistic (Platonic Realistic) view that the world-process is the unfolding of a divine Reason or Logos, on the one hand; and on the other, the extreme doctrine of historical materialism, i. e., that the world develops in terms not of ideas but of blind material forces. A closer examination of the latter, at least in its Marxian and deterministic form, reveals that it may really be brought under the former, though with what a difference of emphasis!

The logic of history, though governed, according to Marxian materialism, by things rather than by reason, nevertheless proceeds by an inevitable dialectic. Essentially it is still a procession of ideas in the Hegelian pattern, a fact that Marx himself emphasized. Much of the time Mr. Laski talks in terms of this determinism. But he permits himself to bring in any amount of inconsistent reasoning that would contradict his first premise.

This determinism of the historical process, common to Hegelian Idealists and materialists alike, differs very radically in its interpretation of causality, depending on the origin of its prime mover. For Hegel that cause, as it was indeed for Plato, was divine reason—a fact that caused his system to be described as Pan-Logism. The ideas took on "hands and feet" in the world of becoming. For Marx, on the contrary, though the process itself conformed to a fixed pattern of conflict, the fundamental causes were the effective causes of economic means and technology—the instruments of production by which men gain a living. In a very real sense Marx was the first "instrumentalist," but he erected the instruments of production into deities who governed their creators. John Dewey refuses to take the logic of dialectic so seriously. His "instrumentalism" is a more inclusive process of experimental procedure.

All this may seem a discursion from the relation of political to social institutions and ideals. But it is essential to get one's own views explicitly organized in relation to these opposing theories before it is possible to formulate a positive theory of political or social causality. I suggest that this lack is what makes Mr. H. J. Laski a political pamphleteer rather than a philosopher. If one subscribes to the Marxian interpretation of history, as Mr. Laski does, he is not at liberty to make forays into the realm of liberal ethics for his values. No more will he be able to accept an anti-authoritarian view of society, if he starts from the Hegelian hierarchy of values. Marx, it is true, did intrude humanitarian values into his utopian communism, but he did so by bringing his dialectic arbitrarily to a close with the victory of the proletariat.

It is fortunately possible to escape this dilemma of Idealism and materialism by rejecting both absolutes and the determinism which goes with them. Aristotle attempted to do this with some success through his teleological conception of the world-process. But it is not possible to accept

one of the absolutes—in the case of Mr. Laski, Marxian materialism—and then play fast and loose with all sorts of inconsistent values that contradict the first premise of the reasoning. Since some coherent view of the nature of the world-process is a fundamental problem of all philosophical speculation and one which is inescapable, it is worth while examining some of the efforts to deal with this puzzle.

Pragmatic instrumentalism throws overboard the whole compulsion of logic and of fixed forms of human action and reduces the world-process to the same sort of radical empiricism which William James avowed: a sort of perpetual and tentative adjustment to a series of situations for which there is no wholesale clue, each situation being unique and individual. This way of thinking rejects the monistic systems of every type of absolute. A radical pluralism is the dominant note of modern pragmatism. As I pointed out in an earlier work, *The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics* (1928), this doctrine is necessarily associated in its critical phase, with anti-authoritarian, revolutionary movements, since it disintegrates the *rationale* for the absolutism both of the Idealistic apology for the state as the embodiment of perfect reason, and the communist dialectic of materialistic determinism. But tested in its own terms of fruits, it produces an anarchic philosophy of social values which human beings cannot in practice tolerate.

Pragmatism, faced with the inevitable necessity of constructing a social order, cannot remain anti-authoritarian. In practice, it turns therefore to the "will to believe," and erects social myths of a type as absolute as either Idealism or communism, e. g., fascism and Nazism. On pragmatic grounds, a myth is true and good if it works, i. e., if it meets the emotional needs which produced it. As instrumentalism, its next development as a theory, pragmatism proposes no adequate tests for what is "success" in experimentation. By sapping and mining the traditional authority of all social discipline, it prepares the way for an appeal to the emotions as the test of satisfaction, or alternatively, it turns, as Mr. Dewey's ethics of "social morality" do, to a vulgar acceptance of a sort of mechanical version of "survivalism"—i. e., the doctrine of organic efficiency for efficiency's sake. In the latter version (Italian Fascism) it strips human values of all the idealistic conceptions of conscious moral personality, and reduces

human societies to the same level of biological ecology that characterizes the anthill or the beehive. Its psychology is essentially behavioristic and not normative. In the former version (the social myth of the Hero and the Heroic Race found in both Italian and German fascism) it offers an emotional compensation to nations ridden by an inferiority complex through permitting them to revert to tribal mysticism. Fascism is an odd combination of these two strains of pragmatism, "the will to believe" and "organic efficiency."

The ironical feature of this evolution is that pragmatic instrumentalism, because of its anti-intellectualism, has lacked the essential checks which would have prevented its degeneration into an emotional "will to believe" (social myths), or into a purely mechanical organization of experimental adjustment into the coercive totalitarian (the so-called corporative) state. By a curious and quite opposite route, it reaches the same state of absolutism which it has condemned in the mysticism of the Idealistic Absolute (Hegel) and in the rigid mechanical determinism of the historical materialists (Marx).

Now the evolution of modern political institutions has followed this disastrous route in a great part of the world. The pendulum-like character of social reactions was not dictated by either immanent reason or by Marxian materialism. Only in those peoples whose institutions were grounded upon a philosophy which married the organic (deterministic) to the purposive (rationally experimental), was a non-violent evolution maintained. The constitutional democracies did not suffer such extreme swings of reaction against state authority. But elsewhere the pluralistic tendency was very marked.

The post-war period saw the state's authority disputed by a variety of other associations which claimed a pluralization of authority to correspond with the radical pluralism of the pragmatists. Mr. Laski was the most articulate and clamorous prophet of this trend. He became champion of every minority against the state's claim to coercive and final authority. He pleaded the case of the trade unions and the working classes, of the church, so far as it served his purpose, of the national minorities, of all rebels against authority in the name of group loyalties of other sorts. He liked to picture himself as Athanasius, but his ends were quite different

from those of the great dissenter. He introduced in a vulgarized form the doctrines of revolutionary syndicalism, of "contingent revolution," and of partial anarchy. He claimed that in doing so he represented the clash of loyalties and of moral values in which the individual must remain always ultimate.

Had this protestant ethic been the true begetter of Mr. Laski's pluralism, he would have been only another contemporary expounder of the school of English Idealism, stemming notably from T. H. Green and represented today by such figures as A. D. Lindsay, the present Master of Balliol. In this country a similar position has been brilliantly maintained by M. R. Cohen, whose philosophical position I subscribe to with few reservations. But this school of Idealism, which rejected the Hegelian dialectic and its absolutism, was at pains to attempt some coherent rationalization of values which would give to a responsible state the authority which it required for its task as the arbiter of legal settlements. So was L. T. Hobhouse (though not an Idealist), who seems to me to have stated most satisfactorily the philosophical position for constitutional democracy. (Hobhouse's *Development and Purpose* is the nearest approach to a satisfactory philosophy of the historical process which I have found. He weighs the deterministic and purposive aspects of human action with as just a balance as any modern philosopher.) Mr. Laski avoided this painful task by proclaiming himself a pragmatist, and *ipso facto* was absolved from the necessity of coherent and systematic theorizing. He proclaimed the doctrine of survival as the test of conflicts of values. Just after the War there seemed to be some realism in his description of a "Discredited State." But on the test of survival his pluralizing of authority has fared very badly indeed. It is the authoritarian state which has survived, not pluralism. *Mr. Laski is today significantly silent about both pluralism and pragmatism.*

But there was always an implicit and a nearly always supressed major premise behind Mr. Laski's crusade for discrediting the state, which in his recent books has become explicit. It develops that he was really less concerned with the moral ultimacy of the individual than he was with the Marxian doctrine of class struggle for economic equality: the individual *must* want economic equality. Now the Marxian concept of *class* is a highly abstract and metaphysical concept. Yet it forms the very basis of Mr. Laski's

system. He accepts from Marx two fundamental dogmas, with reservations in his last work so negligible as to be dismissed as unessential. This is of course not true if one considers all the good tags from other people which Mr. Laski appropriates for his own. But the result of considering all this eclectic collection is to leave his works in the state of a magpie's treasure trove—their natural but not their most instructive condition. *The State in Theory and Practice* contains more wisdom than any of Mr. Laski's previous writings. But it is wisdom that is not consistent with its author's basic doctrine. His own reservations to Marxian doctrine in his classical little exposition of *Communism* have been notably whittled down in his more recent works.

The first of these dogmas is the doctrine of the economic determinism which controls politics, with the emphasis on the compelling character of the possession of economic control over the instruments of production. The second is the Marxian ethic of economic equality as the fundamental basis for political liberty and justice in the control of political power.

With enormous ingenuity and the persuasiveness which make him such an outstanding political partisan, Mr. Laski has striven to hitch this Marxian apparatus on to the liberal philosophy of individual rights and constitutional protections. The effort has involved him in feats of casuistry worthy of the great acrobatic traditions of the classical apologists. But the logic of events has forced his hand. In his recent books, *Democracy in Crisis,* and *The State in Theory and Practice,* he regretfully foresees the issue as one of force, since persuasion and constitutional methods do not seem adequate to accomplish these communist ends. The communists have always been more frank about the matter. Today one would not be far wrong in describing him as a communist of doctrine but not of declaration. He still feels that the time is not ripe for a show-down, and that the communists had better make common cause with social-democrats against fascism. But he does not, today, have a real hope that democratic methods, without direct action on a revolutionary scale, will produce the society that he holds to be ethically necessary, and ultimately destined to be realized.

Now one may be permitted to suggest that this analysis of human nature as essentially guided by a drive for economic equality, and of the

democratic state as one impotent to act contrary to the economic interests of the "capitalist class," is precisely inadequate just where Mr. Laski claims for it its greatest strength, i. e., as a realistic description of fact. Nor is there the slightest evidence from political history that (as the jacket interprets his thesis) "It follows that only when those instruments [of production] are communally owned can the State be neutral as to material welfare, and only then will the battle for the control of State power cease."

If there is anything to be learned from contemporary political history, it is that human beings are demonstrably less interested in economic equality than in economic security. It is the resistance of the middle classes to the great leveler, inflation, which has been the economic motivation of fascism. Surely the "class that controls the instruments of production"—whatever that class may include—in any constitutional democracy that one may choose to look at, is very far from feeling that it has a strangle hold on state policy, including the budget! Nor does the history of Communist Russia, after the suppression of the so-called "exploiting propertied" classes, and under complete communal ownership, suggest that the state "can be neutral as to material welfare," or that "the battle for the control of state power" ceases. Political history and political human nature are not so simple as that. There is an almost religious naïvété about these assumptions, typically Marxian.

It is because Mr. Laski is fundamentally a Marxian in his selection and interpretation of facts that he is having reluctantly to renounce his libertarian doctrines. One cannot insist on suppressing a considerable part of a given society and on changing its institutions by, if necessary, violent means, and still cherish the protection of constitutionalism. And what becomes of the liberty to disagree—if one disagrees entirely with Marx and Mr. Laski on the nature of political justice in the economic realm? Many people still do not accept this gospel—apparently a majority do not. Is that why Mr. Laski despairs of democracy?

Fascism, which meant little or nothing to him as lately as his *Grammar of Politics* (1926), has taught him something since that time. But he still feels that the issue of a revolution to produce economic equality is inevitable and must be forced, though he takes a rather melancholy pleasure in fore-

seeing a bad outcome for men of his persuasion, and the probable triumph of fascism wherever the issue is squarely joined.

One might suppose that this would lead him to revise his estimate of the "realistic" bases of politics, and to moderate the absolutism of his Marxian ends. It might seem reasonable to suggest, and at various times Mr. Laski has suggested, that constitutional democracy had better be maintained, even if complete economic equality and state ownership are not realized. The degree of freedom, defined however one wishes in any intelligible way to define it, is certainly greater in politics and in economics under constitutional democracies. But, in the end, he always returns to the Marxian shibboleths, pushed, it would appear by a curious distortion of historical interpretation like that of Marx. Now that he has come to realize that "pluralizing authority" in practice produces fascism after the sabotage of constitutional morality, he is prepared for a test of strength that will certainly mean state absolutism as its outcome, whoever the victor may be.

It appears therefore that Mr. Laski is not a realist nor a pragmatist except as to method. He is fundamentally a Marxian and appears to be under the compulsion of a deterministic view of the inevitability of the struggle. There is something of the "martyr-complex" in the tone of his latest works, though one might take that more seriously if he were in Germany, not England.

The reason for spending so much time on the case of Mr. Laski lies in the fact that he is a prime example of a kind of so-called liberal thinking that is a very dangerous enemy to constitutional liberty for the very reason that it poses always as a friend. He represents a type of intellectual whose dialectic brilliance as a pamphleteer has had a remarkable effect in an age of skillful publicists but an age of little profound critical thinking. In his earlier phases he asked of constitutional systems that they bear the strains of direct action, including general strikes, which no constitution can sustain. He asked it in the name of liberty. Today he has shifted to complete equality and drawn the battle lines more frankly.

If labor were of a temper to force the issue through the inculcation of this Marxian myth, those of us who are attempting to work out social justice within the framework of political equality and persuasion would be apt to have fascist masters saddled on our back. It becomes highly

important therefore to protect democratic theory from the plausible insistence of those who pose as friends, like Mr. Laski, yet will admit no end for democracy short of economic communism.

Fortunately British labor is not in a frame of mind to choose the martyr's path for the sake of the utopian mirage of Marxian equality. Outside a handful of communists and the Independent Labour Party, there are few authentic Marxians in England. One or two of Mr. Roosevelt's advisors seem to be as much of this stamp as any responsible figure in the British Labour Party; but, when their ends become discernible, they carry little weight. The danger lies precisely in the discredit which these tactics of undermining a constitutional system throw upon those who are attempting to work out an orderly evolution for social justice. Fascism is an ugly and undiscriminating monster, once in power. One of the most vicious heads of this hydra is anti-semitism—which strikes the just and the unjust alike. Those who wish to reform and to move by a flanking strategy instead of frontal attack had better, therefore, guard their ranks from infiltration by the Marxians. For to these last, as Mr. Laski so well shows, the ultimate end is to establish a type of society that can only come through revolution. Or one had better say through a series of revolutions, maintained both in action and reaction, by political terrorism.

Democratic and constitutional government is in sad need of finding a clearer defense of its own faith. It must return to a wisdom like Aristotle's theory of the mixed state. It cannot admit, as Mr. Laski does, any absolute pattern of human justice which *must* be imposed, whether of economic "individualism" or of Marxian collectivism. Its economy will be mixed to conform to the degree of acceptance which state control has won from the electorate, for a given sector of the national system. Its method must be one of experiment and not of imposition by fiat, even a fiat from a plebiscitary majority. Its reading of history, however, must do justice to the stable and organic character in its institutions as well as to the empirical. Such a philosophy of history will give purpose a place like that assigned to it by Hobhouse rather than by the pragmatic anti-intellectualists. It must equally give to the economic and to the deterministic factors of other sorts their due in terms more like those of Harrington and Madison

than Hegel or of Marx. Madison was not an advocate of class struggle. He wished to curb "factions."

The real danger to the constitutional systems of the great modern democracies lies in the disintegration of those primary groups and voluntary associations which produce individuals capable of self-discipline and voluntary coöperation. The family, the neighborhood, the school, the church—these must be restored or new groups must take their places. The beliefs on which these units function as centers of social development are in need of reshaping, just as are the beliefs about social justice, and property. But Marx offers a Procrustean remedy. He recognizes nothing but class. Russia today is painfully trying to rebuild what a Marxian revolution destroyed.

Human history has shown the disintegration of great societies, in which economic changes, urbanization, and the like, all played a crucial part. But it has also shown the regenerative power of great faiths to reshape order from chaos, as the Holy Roman Empire did. The contemporary impact of Marxian materialism is being met, outside the great democracies, by an even more crass reaction toward racial and national myths in the fascist countries. Democracies, unless they cultivate self-discipline and spiritual values in their own citizens, are likely to find no better answer. The battle lines seem to be drawn by the parties. But the real action is being fought out in the supporting zones of church, home, school, and local community.

Mr. Laski and the Marxians would say the battle is lost there because radio, press, and propaganda of every sort have conspired with mass production and "wage-slavery" to destroy the centers of resistance to enslavement to the capitalist order. But does not the issue lie deeper still? Would turning the instruments of production over to a state—even such a state as utopian communism conceives and Russia certainly does not realize in practice—would this increase the stature of man's moral dignity or add an iota to his freedom? Economic pressure is still economic pressure, property is still property, and its disposal generates political struggle under any system. Kulaks have to be "liquidated," and the peasants "collectivized." A regeneration of men's spiritual values is not to be accomplished by a Five-Year Plan, nor by a gospel according to Marx.

The Marxian view of history comes nearest the truth in its analysis of war. It is certainly war that leaves the wreckage of societies to communism as to a residuary legatee. Yet is it at all conceivable that a collectivist economy in Japan or in Italy, both less gorged than is Russia with natural resources, would solve the problem of population pressure? Would a completely socialized economy for England be able to treat the areas under British control in a less imperial manner? To do so would mean a drastic lowering of British living standards. It is not simply a system of class relations which breeds war, but a nationalism which managed-systems seem to increase rather than to diminish. The brotherhood of communists is a hypothetical thing. Labor solidarity has fared very badly when really tested.

I am enough a Platonist to suggest that nobler myths, more compatible with the age-long hunger of human souls, are needed. And, though it may take some dreadful punishment to bring to that view, this generation, puffed up with its easy mechanical conquest over things, only the principles inherent in all great religions and imperfectly institutionalized in our constitutional protections for moral personality, will make communities which can live the good life and let others live it too.

The state must set the condition of economic life. The state itself can become a senior and controlling partner over the national economy. But when it attempts political management in detail of the whole system, it must rely on terror for its coercion.

THE TENSE OF POETRY

John Crowe Ransom

THE PERIODICAL is dedicated, one believes, to the highest pleasures of the modern intelligence. Sensible of the honor of making an early contribution, and writing about poetry, whose issues are so hotly and so subtly contested in these days, one would look about for something bright and smart, suitable for the occasion; and is slightly chagrined to find oneself taking the text out of—Tennyson.

But not from either, indifferently, of the contrasted personalities that can be identified under that name; not from the exemplary laureate, of oratund and mildly official strains. Rather from the Tennyson who was temperamentally, like most of the profounder poets, melancholic; who could not reconcile himself to the handsome creature comforts of his century, was nostalgic almost to the point of bitterness, and puzzled about the source of his resentment. No philosophical psychologist, so far as I know—and no other kind of psychologist will do—has speculated seriously upon that oppression of spirit which is celebrated in the "Tears, Idle Tears." I think it is time.

Anticipating this more expert analysis, it occurs to me that we have here a first-class instance of the poet sensible of wrongs which time has inflicted upon him; but subtle wrongs, scarcely permitting of definition; not defined at all for the poet. Why the tears? "I know not what they mean." Flowing from what wound? "From the depths of some divine

despair." The poet can tell, however, the sort of occasion upon which they arise:

> In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more.

The fine spectacle produces a homesickness, not clearly directed. What days are referred to?

Now the scene which prompts the tears is as gentle, and presumably as pleasant, as any of the aspects which nature ever wears. But lest it appear that he grieves because he is reminded of some simple loss particularly associated with it, like the death of a sweetheart or a parent, or the alienation of the property, or even because it provokes him to some bourgeois and much-parodied sentiment about the passing of his youth, he gives other occasions provocative equally: the ship coming up over the horizon, the sound of the bird to the awaking ears at dawn. It really does not matter so much about the occasions, except for the consideration that they all seem remarkably innocent and charming; but what they produce is not joy so much as sadness.

Nostalgia is frequent with poets; it is the subject I wish to examine. But it occurs to them in two different ways, of which this is only one. It calls from them a tribute to the vague undated past; a sense that life somehow used to be happier, that life now is scarcely tolerable; that we have gone from bad to worse. And this results in reflective or "philosophical" poetry. Parallel with the present poem are such poems as Wordsworth's "The world is too much with us"; or as first Vaughan's and then Wordsworth's idealization of the dimly recalled excellence of the child-state. Such poetry is more ruminative than creative, and not of the ultimate order of artistic objectivity.

The other nostalgia does not discuss itself, nor brood over the whole vague past, but recovers out of the past the specific experience, and out of that makes the poem. Its performance is sharp, dramatic, brilliant. Of this order are most poems, perhaps. Tennyson writes them. He is continually going back to the simpler world of the past, though it may be of the racial past rather than his own private one, and elaborating with love its occasions; in "Mariana," which is medieval, or in "Lotus Eaters" and "Ulysses," which are Greek.

A poem like Keats' "Grecian Urn" is of course a mixture; it offers a specific situation, but reflects upon it as the example of how art salvages the image of happiness out of the stream of time, and makes of it—not the happiness but the image—a monument and a reproach.

The poetic reflection and the poetic re-creation: we will keep them both. The first offers a document for aesthetic theory; it illuminates the second. Tennyson is saying in the poem about the tears: This is the sort of obsession which the poets have to carry; this is the attitude of the modern poet to his present; this is serious, it looks bad, make what you can of it.

II

Poets would not have to direct their attention to the past if they could find their poetry in the present; they would not revive the dead and gone if they did not find the living and actual too prosy.

Poetry is a kind of language, and therefore a kind of experience. It distinguishes itself by an act of will from prose, which is also a language and an experience. Probably that is its whole intention. If there were no prose, there would not have to be a poetry; and the more ubiquitous the tyranny of the prose, the more necessary it is to undertake the poetry, and the harder.

The history of the race in this matter might seem to us, if we cared to reconstruct it, to run through three periods, as follows.

First a Golden Age, such as Ovid describes; or a Garden of Eden period, if we prefer to dwell on a fuller version which we have sometimes liked to claim as our special spiritual inheritance; a period in which there was only one language. Call it the age of neither prose nor poetry, or the age when prose and poetry were one. It was certainly a prehistoric period; it exists only as a legend, or as an atavistic memory if such a thing is possible. (It seems possible to the extent that we recapitulate in our private development the history of the race.) And referring back to the past, it cannot easily be referred to the future, as a prospect to which we are approaching again. The dualism in our lives, the vicissitude of prose and poetry, has set, and can scarcely go back into the undifferentiated unity of experience.

Second, the historical epochs, when prose—the language spoken by business, morality, science—has existed in steadily increasing efficiency or purity; and when—for this had to follow immediately— poetry has arisen by an effort to stand beside it, or against it. All the periods we are familiar with have had this double character.

But third, an occasional late or "modern" age, like the present one for our society, when poetry has had to torture itself, becoming difficult and strange, in order to be poetry at all; that is, when it has been all but impossible for it to establish its own identity as other than prose, and to offer the advantages which we require when we wish to resort to poetry. Prose marches right along, a perfect serial progress, finding each step easier than the last one. Poetry fights against an increasing resistance. The resistance is located, if we like, in the objects that refuse to submit themselves to poetical treatment because they have already been experienced prosily; the agents of prose, who are all over the earth, having successively invaded every field of objects that has occurred to them as worth claiming. Or it is located, if we prefer, in our own minds, which have acquired such a prose habit that those parts which are not active in prose are thoroughly suppressed, and can hardly break through and exercise themselves.

We alternate between prose and poetry, and neither one, for quite different reasons, is a sufficient and proper experience. But I suggest, in parenthesis, that we can support life if we must on this dualistic diet. It is not necessary to be panicky about it. It may be that we wrench ourselves with some violence from prose to poetry, and then slip back into the prose, both modes being less than satisfactory, yet both when put together managing to involve all our powers. It seems that we know little but dualisms, pluralisms, successions, the discharge *seriatim* of quite different functions, in these longitudes. Philosophically we are always crying out for the perfect integers of a monistic experience, the all-at-once, but though we can conceive them we have them very rarely if ever. Yet we survive.

III

It is probably impossible to enforce the distinction between prose and poetry, or science and poetry, upon persons who have not discovered it

for themselves. But it is an ancient distinction. The legend of the Garden of Eden is concerned with it, telling, I think, how prose made its appearance in the world. (I suppose it tells something; this venerated piece of symbolic or Oriental wisdom could hardly have been so childish as the ordinary Occidental interpretations of it.) The tree of knowledge from which man abstained originally, and in abstaining perpetuated his happy state, was the tree of prose; that is, of knowledge as technique and knowledge as power, of all those hard calculations by which he could have set in to act more effectively upon nature. But if he really abstained, it was for an earliest period only, and a short one—really a period that we must regard as inferential, and highly fanciful. Adam soon ate of the fruit, whereupon his history started, and became the only kind of history which the race has really known. Now God had not meant in his providence that Adam should saddle himself with the responsibility of the specific prose knowledges. God, assisted by his angels, was willing to know and manage the causes of things, a task too painful for human strength, and to operate the difficult universe according to the laws of maximum efficiency and perfect economy. The rôle which he assigned to Adam was of an economic simplicity amounting to amateurism: to keep and dress the garden. It took no technique, involved only what today we should call unskilled labor, and that of a kind permitting what modern labor has almost universally renounced: enjoyment, or free sensibility. Probably this labor did not even invite distinction as contrasting especially with play, or leisure. But Adam repudiated this rôle and undertook the specialized and efficient functions. Regretfully, and perhaps a little ironically, God acquainted him with the direful consequences, and made to himself a remark which it is hard to understand:

> 22. Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:
>
> 23. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

The Lord God seems to be observing that man has involved himself in the toils of time, the consciousness of mortality, and nostalgia; that he will learn eventually to sigh with Tennyson,

> O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

"To know good and evil": Adam enters now upon the moralistic stage; which seems to his historian an evolution, a disintegration, a decadence from his nobler estate. (I owe a good deal at this point to my friend, Mr. Richard Weaver.) Originally, one day unfolded filially and blissfully from a previous day, Adam taking them as they came, accepting the massive experiences they brought, with unlimited sensibility. But now begins criticism, choice, exclusion, and denial, all provoked by the insidious little worm named "ought"; now comes the drive of the efficiencies, producing instantly just those inhibitions which will culminate in the extreme self-tortures of Puritanism, or for that matter in the incredible labors of a Ford factory employee of the twentieth century A. D. Lugubrious outlook, for a Creator who had meant kindly.

At any rate, the idea was that man thereupon entered upon his famous upward career, which may be defined as that of a technician. His record has been one of wonderful progress in his prose, or in his acquisition of the techniques. It has also been one of an ever-sharpening dualism, or disintegration. He has had to be at one moment an efficient fellow (scientist, economist, and so on) and at the next moment, by a difficult and awkward effort at compensation, a poet. Usually, it may be supposed, he has been the prose man for three or four moments, the poet for one moment. We hear in certain branches of learning about the "lags," or unequal rates of development as between different features of an organic assemblage. Probably the stubbornest lag in human history has been the lag of poetry, trying to keep up with prose, and falling always a little further behind.

IV

It is unfortunate, but it must be conceded that the state of the original Adam is not the happiness that has been supposed; that the idea we have formed of it is an unsound inference. That flattering moment in the career of the race does not answer to logic. Adam, in the absence of technical thought-processes, was incapable of a distinguished aesthetic experience. No percept without a concept, sharp percepts mean sharp concepts, rich percepts mean a multiplicity of concepts; and lacking the latter he could not have had the former, and his integral or unitary experience could not have been like the thing exhibited in the work of art, but must have

resembled the life of the uninformed child, or even that of the insensitive beasts. The brilliant effect we admire in a poem is the result of compounding many prose effects, and technical or specific ones. The business of poetry, in fact, is to take the technical prose effect, which is hard, and soften or dissolve it in a total experience.

But here is a paradox. The possibility of poetry depended on an event that carried also the possibility of its destruction. The technical knowledges give rise to poetry, and submit to it for a time, then they go on their way too fast for poetry to keep up with them. Sensibility implies efficiency, but the efficiency becomes an end in itself, and does not any more intend to be picked up and completed by sensibility. Though Lucretius may have felt assured that the contemporary science was capable of a poetic rendering, and though Wordsworth, confronted by the much more formidable science of his day, was not sufficiently apprehensive but hoped that the poetry would always, and automatically, arise which could follow it up and express it, we know definitely now that no such thing is possible. There are hundreds of common techniques which are entirely too technical for poetry to handle, and which will never surrender a scrap of their technicality in the interest of poetry. Efficiency has outdistanced sensibility.

Rebels, Utopians, in the recklessly efficient societies, appeal to an age of innocence as prior to all efficiency; but what they really mean is an age when sensibility and efficiency were equal, and married, and had the prescriptive respect of husband and wife for one another. They deceive themselves in thinking that happiness obtained best before the cruel husband appeared at all, or when he was but an infant; it could not have been marriage with the husband lacking, or between children whose sexual distinctiveness was not yet realized.

The loving reconstruction of the idyllic state is one of those feats of anachronism, by which we would recover all the privileges and cancel all the disadvantages of an extant culture, when they are equally the consequence of one historic movement. To put this more circumstantially, and in terms for the present occasion: Adam could not have been anything so admirable as an ante-bellum Louisiana planter. He could not have smoked cigars, nor trimmed his beard, nor had money and accounts, nor, in the modern sense, traveled, nor sat on the piazza reading the newspaper,

nor savored in one intelligent breath the magnolias on the lawn and the odors from his kitchen, nor comforted himself with allegiance to any cause or principle, church or state, nor raised cotton or known the uses of it, nor enjoyed any one of those pointed "interests" whose sum is what we generally mean by civilization. Likewise every modern malcontent must assure himself that, in whatever choice local fashion he may represent to himself the happiness of life as it might be, original man did not have it.

When the pursuit of the techniques presents itself to sensitive moderns as having gone much too far, and too much by itself, they resent it excessively, and without qualification cry against science, specialization, "industrialism," or whatever the term be under which the formidable abstract techniques present themselves; they declare they would sweep the damned thing clean away. This is a violent reaction, and if successful would destroy the thing we want as well as the thing we hate. More temperate would be the policy of not sweeping anything away before we asked precisely wherein science had failed to proceed *pari passu* with sensibility, and in what recent actions had removed itself to where sensibility could not reach it. That question itself might not be quite intelligible, and therefore answerable, in all cases. To act upon it would not be suicidal, though it would be sufficiently heroic. The action would be dictated by regard for the total economy.

This latter action is exactly what the creative poets, in their harmless make-believe, perform every day. They abandon the barrens of science—the areas not accessible to sensiblity—and turn backward; they go till they reach some point where the totalitarian mind is still capable of assimilating its sciences. But the former action, the cutting off of science at its roots, is what the poets in their reflective moments like to brood upon.

V

Opposed to the intuition of the poets, who locate happiness in the past, and whose poetry recovers it out of the past, if it can, is the view that it lies in the future, in front of a steady line of march which is called evolution. This view, if we consider the common drift of the testimony upon the issue, is heresy.

A heretic poet appears occasionally. Tennyson, whose sense of the thing as a spontaneous poet is intuitive and certain, is intimidated by the argument of scientists who know nothing about the psychology of happiness, and allows himself to "look forward." But Shelley is much more aggressive. A rationalist (see *The Necessity of Atheism*), personally versed in the scientific technique, a false or at least a biased theorist about the meaning of poetry, yet tortured like the other romantic poets by the tyranny of an age of prose, his career is not self-consistent. He never conceded that the health of poetry and the independent career of science were antithetical, and he could look to the future for the return of the Golden Age. His program, with a little patting down and fixing, is like a premature piece of Marxianism, as follows. Production, under the law of maximum efficiency; what a desolate area of prose! Distribution, under the law of love; now we applaud. Consumption, under the law of beauty; which is very fine if we can believe in it. The combination pictures very well the Shelley about whom everybody eventually has to ask himself the question: Would he really have matured if he had lived to attain the years of wisdom? But his poetry is, frequently, poetry, and it is in spite of his philosophy. His discomforts, as actually attached to the car of progress, are as authentic as anybody's, and express themselves in many "lines written in dejection," like the following:

> I could lie down like a tired child
> And weep away this life of care.

The Furies did not overlook this confident young man.

Wordsworth had less power of specific poetry, but a much better sense of its meaning. In his famous Preface he is repeatedly on the verge of laying down the principle that poetry looks necessarily to the past. For example, he says poetry is essentially an emotion *recollected*, it is not itself the original emotion; and in defiance of his contention about the power of poetry to assimilate any act of science, he argues on behalf of *humble and rustic life*, as its field, a policy which must bear the odium of being a regression, and to the smarter of his contemporary readers did bear it.

Whatever certain poets may think, we cannot well rule out of court the nostalgia which is so commonly associated with poetry. Under its influence we may talk and think a little wildly about the "scenes of my

childhood," and when called upon to be particular, we may fix it absurdly upon a lot of respective old oaken buckets. Such items are at least beyond reproach in the quality of their innocence; they stand probably for the whole fringe of our former outraged consciousness, or rather even for the major wealth of its content, which our technical procedures brushed too hastily aside. It is attended, one might argue, by the sense of sin, but probably sin not so much personal as racial, inherited, original. It may even be that nostalgia is nothing less than the concrete form of our time-sense. The basis of that sense becomes in this event a biological experience: the outrage performed upon one function of the mind, the aesthetic, by the progress of the other function, the efficient. This may be the natural history behind the formidable metaphysical concept of time; the concept might in this way define itself for us essentially, or internally, and not have to wait upon our external or material deprivations before it formed within our heads. I imagine such an account, if really eligible, would not be surprising to modern psychologists, who are very daring.

The biological intuition, concerning what has happened to us in the course of our progress, is necessarily correct if it is true that the evolutionary process is always from the generic to the specific, from the undifferentiated function to the definition of parts and the division of labor. In view of this common biological understanding I am unable to see how monistic philosophers, religionists, scientists if they bother about such things, and sometimes poets, can assume that we are moving towards, not away from, the birth of a totalitarian mind in which our split personalities will be healed. There is nothing forward-looking about a nostalgia.

VI

But all this has to do with the philosophical thesis, a very broad thing, which the poets entertain, and the lovers of poetry, with various degrees of explicitude. We ask what the specific poems, the ones that we cherish as perfect creations, are doing. I should say that they are dramatizing the past.

Prose has dominated the marketplace, the senate, the camp, the executive offices, the laboratories, the learned professions, and nearly all the public occasions. It is the language of the actual. Poetry has had to resort

to—the stage. The stage may or may not be symbolic of all the artistic activities, but certainly it symbolizes poetry. The stage is not real life but make-believe; which is another way of saying that it handles the past, and in particular those clearly marked alternative paths which we came to in the past but did not take. On the stage are only actors; they transact business which is only "business," or simulated action, and they read their lines from a book. Now we may go about during the day and observe how men of action transact the business of life, or as men of action ourselves we probably know quite well how it is done: We know that we do not transact it right. So on the stage the actors are trying to show us, and we are crowding the hall trying to discover from watching them, just how we would have transacted certain businesses if we had been integers, and not actual historic men; that is, alternations of business man and unhappy resentful aesthetic man by turns. Even if the business is murder, we should transact it in the manner of Othello, with fury, pity, horror, love, and circumstance, and not, let us say, in the professional and infra-human manner of a Chapman or Dillinger. The stage shows how to enjoy business while transacting it; and to enjoy means technically, I believe, to transact with the whole of our being, and to make the transaction lack nothing of being a completely expressive experience.

A courtier in a play is represented as remarking that all the world is a stage; it suited his character to say this, for he was a person of no account in the world of affairs. A poet-king similarly announced that life is but a walking shadow, a poor player strutting his stage; the announcement came at a moment when the poetry was gaining on the kingship, and about to put it out of business. The reality of life suddenly vacated its usual aspect of efficient action and became poetry—the diffused and inclusive experience, nothing less. But the poet-king was a character in a play, in a poem; the actual ones are not generally like that. If they are, it may be apprehended that they will not long maintain their crowns. In practice the law of efficiency prevails, the poetry is pushed unceremoniously into the closet; to be rescued with sufficient difficulty later, when it can do no harm, because the occasion is safely past.

Poems are little dramas, exhibiting actions in complete settings rather than pure or efficient actions. We shall return presently to the dramatic characteristics of poetry.

Our arts, certainly our poems, should fill us with pride because they furnish our perfect experiences. But they fill us also with mortification because they are not actual experiences. If we regard them in a certain mood, say when the heat of action is upon us, they look like the exercises of children, showing what might have been. Participating in the show which is poetry, we expel the taint of original sin and restore to our minds freedom and integrity. Very good. But we are forced to note presently, when we go out of the theater, that it was only make-believe, and, as we go down the same street by which we came, that we are again the heirs of history, and fallen men.

The tense of poetry is the past. More accurately, it is the pluperfect—the apodosis of a contrary-to-fact condition. The fullness of sensibility which attends the action in poetry is "true," which means that it is "recovered," which means that it had a sort of existence in the actual past; but a furtive one, from which attention was withheld, so that it registered only upon the faithful and disregarded camera of memory. In the poetry which goes back and seeks it, it is crowned with its dignity.

VII

The efficient self pursues its way, which is economical with respect to the attainment of its specific goals, and wasteful with respect to the wealth of the successive situations through which it passes; a Sherman marching through a Georgia and destroying what he cannot use. But when it goes into camp for a day the aesthetic self, which has had very little part in directing so urgent a march, steals back upon the route, and here or there finds a place to stop, to make its peace with the violated region, and to enjoy the country.

This is figurative; and the figure may not work to the last detail. The point is that poetry retraces a certain line of progress and builds its own triumphant monuments somewhere in the superseded past. A question or two arises for the critic. First, in what spirit does this handsome gratification take place?

Poetry knows both pleasure and pain. The pleasure amounts to mirth, to an almost pure irresponsible joy, in some poems. The poet has forgotten the fatal tense and is almost completely under the spell of the illusion;

just as there are writers of historical narrative who drop into the "historical present" and hypnotize themselves into such a lively impression of the events that they do not remember that these happened long ago and are no longer really accessible to experience. This is, on the whole, the "natural" or unreflective kind of poetry. It is not common in the "modern" periods, when poets realize poetry only by strenuous effort, and cannot be unaware of the technique of illusion by which, at one and the same time, we remark both that it is sustained and that its reality is vitiated. Melancholy and bitterness inform this kind of poetry; though it might be argued that when it is most successful the joy is intenser because we sense it as especially precarious.

The pain and the pleasure are intangibles; they may limit each other, or perhaps they may co-exist marvelously; their determination requires a better calculus than the psychologists have been able to provide.

An easier question is this one: At what point on the return is poetry to stop? The answer is, certainly, that it stops where it pleases, always provided that it pleases to stop where there is really a stopping-place.

Poets go back a long way, in excessive revulsion against the prose techniques, or they refuse to go very far, if stubbornly determined to bridge, and not merely to forget, the dichotomy that holds the mind apart. A succession of poetries might perhaps be arranged, not necessarily according to the chronology of composition, which would recapitulate all the substantial stages in the development of the individual mind; or for that matter of civilization. There are species of poetry addressed to adults which are so childish as to lay themselves open to suspicion by the morbid pathologists of being instances of infantilism. There is a predisposition on the part of poets to employ the "little" word; it seems a natural alternative to the technical jargon of the high-powered prose processes, but evidently poetry does not require it in some given overwhelming proportion to the polysyllabic constituents.

Poetry also chooses according to its taste among the broad historical or evolutionary stages. Accordingly it goes pastoral (Theocritus and Spenser); goes humble and rustic (Wordsworth) or "agrarian," to use a term with some current significance; goes humorous and rustic (Frost). It still fancies occasional Ptolemaic effects in an age of Copernicanism

and, worse still, relativity. In a period when manners decayed, and the relations between the sexes were marked by grossness, the poets with their finer sensibilities addressed to their imaginary ladies sequences of sonnets which recovered the highly ingenuous language of the courts of love: Elizabethan Petrarchism. When the Christian mysteries are dissipated under Protestant naturalism, English-speaking poets return to the age of miracles as Greeks, or as medieval Romans; and when these recourses are unavailing, they try occult symbolism; sometimes it is the real or historic thing (the Masonic-Rosicrucian-Cabalist article: practiced by A.E., Yeats, Eliot, if I am not mistaken), sometimes it is a private system (Blake), and sometimes perhaps it is a fraud and a pretense. (I confess I have suspected the late E. A. Robinson's inconclusive intimations in this direction of being faked; but then the plight of a religious poet in an age of reason is desperate; the honest Wordsworth himself could not find an objective expression.)

We survey these and other returns common to poets with misgivings. Is this as close as poetry can come to expressing the actual contemporary mind, which bristles with its prose techniques? Can poetry save nothing of the modern learning? I imagine that no very positive reassurance is possible.

The poetry which makes the manliest effort to be contemporary, and to retreat as little as possible upon the road that has been traveled, is like that of the so-called metaphysical school of the Seventeenth Century. It is being tried today by poets who are the real outposts of the poetic movement. I refer of course to the daring with which such poets attempt to furnish the comprehensive area of consciousness without rejecting all the pure prose terms, so that scraps of technical learning appear there along with the simple sensibles and do not seem foreign; as if we were at home at last with our modern accomplishments. A poetic experience of this kind is exhilarating. If the future of poetry is immense, this is the bold policy which it may have to pursue.

But I do not mean to seem too convinced about the immensity.

VIII

Drama is a good symbol for poetry, but it is really something closer than a symbol. Poetry is not literally drama; at least it does not have to be, and usually it is not specific drama, being a form of expression far freer and subtler. But historically and logically it looks like a derivative of drama. It maintains faithfully certain dramatic features. The poet does not speak in his own but in an assumed character, and not in the actual but in an assumed situation, and the first thing we do as readers of poetry is to determine precisely what character and what situation are assumed. In this determining lies the possibility of critical understanding and at the same time of the illusion and the enjoyment.

If a poem is not a drama proper, it may be said to be a dramatic monologue. This is the literary type, in an accurate yet flexible sense, whose pattern or outline can be made out in objective poems; and Browning only literalized and made readier for the platform of the concert hall the thing that had always been the poem's lawful form. For poetry must have discovered early that it was not necessarily an enterprise for a company, with a stage to fit out, and parts to work up, and the image of actual life to be labored out in detail and with much paraphernalia. A single performer could manage with an impersonation, or with what we call today a reading. This was enough to release him from his actual or prose self and to induce poetic experience.

There is not time to test this thesis laboriously. For a very easy case, we recall that the Elizabethan poets often said to themselves: Let us play at shepherds. Hence the individual pastorals. The pastoral poet became a shepherd, sporting with a shepherdess, playing on his pipe, talking about fame and fate, plucking the flowers and moralizing the landscape; incidentally telling his sheep. Thus the Passionate Shepherd to his Love:

> Come live with me and be my love,
> And we will all the pleasures prove . . .

With regard to this my friend, Mr. George Gullette, notes: "Nobody who read this was simple enough to suppose from it that Marlowe, the author, was intent on seducing the British maidens." Marlowe was only impersonating a shepherd, and doing it neatly; had to do it, because he really failed in love, and failed in business, in that sense in which we have all

failed at our economic and animal roles, even where we have been most successful—for the reason that we construed them prosily, or under the aspect of efficiency.

But there are many other parts besides the shepherd's which poets have assumed. Sometimes they are very subtle, yet they register distinctly a unitary personality; if they do not, there are always critics acute enough to expose their departures from what is appropriate to the "tone," or the "situation."

IX

Expanding the idea of the dramatic monologue, we may in conclusion briefly examine the poetic technique. Retiring from his prose character, assuming a part not his own (but not so alien to his past that he cannot enter into it with detailed understanding), the poet commits himself to a poetic experience. Under what rules does he work? It should not seem too remarkable that the poet flying from the techniques appears to embrace one of his own making, and a hard one. The poet requires a technique for escaping techniques.

For poetry is an artifice, practised with an adult cunning. It is the failing of most aesthetic philosophies that their consideration is almost entirely of aesthetic experience in general, not of the enormously sophisticated work of art. Croce, for example, does not seem to suspect that the pre-logical experience of the child differs from the mature and sometimes desperate adventures of the artist; he says nothing about the genesis of art, nor its epistemological status as a construct. Yet, though we may envy the child his aesthetic experience, it is too plain that we seek for ourselves one of which he could have no conception, and that this is the one which ought to make the really interesting chapters of a treatise on aesthetics. It is as if the aestheticians had never experienced the urgencies nor understood the tricks of artists, and, seeing with how easy and theoretical an account of the matter they are satisfied, as if they had failed to note some obvious implications in the product; so that the dominion of this realm of speculation promises to pass from the philosophers to the mere psychologists precisely as some of these latter have said. The former talk about aesthetic experience, which is abstract; the latter examine the works of art.

I run the risk of making the formula too simple, but I suggest that the technique of writing poetry falls under two prescripts.

First, the poet puts on the mask. It places him before his public—and in his own mind for that matter—as an anonymous person and not as himself. The mask covers his face sufficiently to conceal his actual identity, and intimates that he is not to reveal it otherwise; if he should reveal it, it would cause the irruption into the poetic drama of external action, or prose. Now the mask is not actually a piece of cloth, but its equivalent for the purpose: it is the meter. For meter is an artificial language. One does not transact actual business in it, one does not appear before the Chamber of Commerce uttering meters. The poet within us is released by the adoption of a tongue whose principle is novel, and wholly irrelevant to the virtues of prose discourse. We require the foreign language. There is a paradox which holds good up to a point, I think, within the experience of any poet: the more accurate the meters, the freer and more incalculable the discourse. It is as if, once the poet has undertaken the obligation to make meters, he is relieved of the obligation to make practical sense. The two obligations are in theory, though fortunately not quite in fact, incompatible. Poetry does lack something of making perfect "sense," if we take that term in its purest prose meaning as involving those strict and homely sisters, Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. The meter is the guarantee of an eternal "play," or looseness, in its substance. One of the features of prosody is rhyme, but Milton elected to sacrifice it, and the reason alleged was that rhyme made poets express things otherwise, "and for the most part worse," than they would else have expressed them.

It is questionable whether Milton himself felt the difficulty of rhyme in this manner. Linguistic skill may reach such proficiency that the meter ceases to be a serious impediment to logical expression. There are poets in any "modern" period who are not emancipated from prose by its employment, but remain prosy in spite of their meters. But this is contrary to natural expectation. It was calculated, we judge, that meter would bring about the abdication of prose and, if we are allowed but one flat historical generalization, we must say that the calculation was successful.

X

On the other hand, it is easy to overestimate the gaiety, the abandon, of metered expression. Prose is the supremely single and exclusive experience, possible only by an abridgment of personality. But poetry does not jump to the other extreme and seek the chaos of complete diffusion as its goal. As the expression of personality it needs direction and meaning. Therefore it submits to the other of its technical requirements.

The second prescript is this: the poet puts on the costume. It is a "period" costume perhaps; a rather conventional one, or else one that bears on the private history of the impersonator, or probably both at once; at any rate one that is distinct and identifiable, and implies a "business" to suit. The advantage of the mask is negative, inhibiting the prose function and releasing the aesthetic function, but the advantage of the costume is positive, giving form to the aesthetic activity. For the costume is selective. It binds the play of sensibility to the playing of a character-part, and unifies it by dramatic propriety.

The work of art is immensely important to its artist; it is inevitable, being his expression. Art would not strike us as being worth talking about unless we could premise the discussion on the sincerity of artists. And here the prescript of costume applies. The poem must have logic, meaning, sense; that is, character; but not the immediate character of the poet. He does not interrupt the poem to tell us about himslf, though we might be interested in his difficulties; that would have the same effect as if he had interrupted his meters to insert some prose. He becomes the figure in the costume strictly. Naturally it is desirable that he should have elected a figure in costume congenial with himself, and of his own level of advancement; also that he should have the gift of minutely sympathetic imagination. Then the poem becomes formidable, because it expresses him.

So the poet's attention to mask and costume becomes a possible formula, and gives us one version of the poetic process: others may be entirely tenable. It seems to describe the sufficient technique by which poetry furnishes the perfect form of experience; and reminds us that it is a dramatic rather than a real experience.

ART AND THE REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDE

Herbert Read

When an artist, a poet, or a philosopher—the kind of person we often describe as an intellectual—ventures to take part in the political controversies of his own time, he always does so at a certain risk. It is not that such questions are beneath his notice; for they involve, in the end, the very problems of art and ethics which are his particular concern. But the immediate application of general principles is rarely possible in politics, which are ruled by expediency and opportunism—modes of conduct which the intellectual cannot decently adopt. Nevertheless, in so far as his intellectual detachment, which is quite simply the scientific method, does lead to definite conclusions, to that extent the intellectual should declare his political position.

The poet, however, who is only one kind of intellectual, is in a more embarrassing situation than most of his kind. He is a creature of intuitions and sympathies, and by his very nature shrinks from definiteness and doctrinaire attitudes. Pledged to the shifting process of reality, he cannot subscribe to the static provisions of a policy. He has two principal duties: to mirror the world as it is, and to imagine the world as it might be. In Shelley's sense he is a legislator, but the House of Poets is even more incapacitated than the House of Lords. Disfranchised by his lack of residence in any fixed constituency, wandering faithlessly in the no-man's-land of his imagination, the poet cannot, without renouncing his essential function, come to rest in the bleak conventicles of a political party. It is not his

pride that keeps him outside; it is really his humility, his devotion to the complex wholeness of humanity—in the physical sense of the word, his magnanimity.

Special causes have intensified the indecision of my own generation. I do not exaggerate the effect of the war; in my case I can see quite clearly that experience of war was not the immediate cause of political disillusion and inactivity. But it would be absurd entirely to discount the psychological effects of that experience, in so far as it was the direct experience of death and destruction. It will be recalled how Dostoevsky keyed himself up to face death one cold morning in 1849; and how he was at the last moment reprieved. It was an experience which his critics have found highly significant for his subsequent development. But that was an experience endured tens or hundreds of times by intellectuals in the war—not by intellectuals only, of course, but by intellectuals in common with others less likely to register their psychological reactions. But in spite of such experiences, I remember that when peace came in 1918, I personally still retained the youthful idealism which had been mine in 1914. The disillusion came with the peace—with the slow-motion farce of the Treaty negotiations, with the indifference which people in power felt for the opinion of the men who had fought, with the general spread of false sentiment and hypocrisy. We had fought for Peace, for a decent world; we found we had won trophies of hatred and greed, of national passion and commercial profiteering, of political reaction and social retrenchment—not one voice, not one party, not even a Christian Church, openly declaring itself for a world of economic justice, a world free from the faults that had led us into the horrors of a world war.

Only in Russia there was a difference—a withdrawal from the scramble, a struggle for a new order of some sort. But from the depths of imposed ignorance and hopelessness, it seemed impossible to believe in the reality and the permanence of that revolution; impossible to estimate its significance.

My difficulty then was to find an immediate active rôle for the intellectual in politics. The only guide I found in this personal dilemma was the French philosopher and critic, Julien Benda. This very sharp and subtle mind had first attracted me by an attack on Bergson, at a time when Berg-

son was very much my enthusiasm. He was not just to Bergson, but he weaned me from my allegiance, and my mind was fully prepared for the sterile intellectualism of Benda's subsequent works. That expression is perhaps too strong, for Benda's main contention, in such a book as *La Trahison des Clercs,* is unassailable. I shared his desire to occupy a detached position; quite simply, to be left alone to get on with my job as a poet, an intellectual, a "clerk." Unfortunately, as Benda admitted in his book, modern economic conditions scarcely permit the clerk to fulfill his function; and so "the true evil to deplore in our time is perhaps not the treason of the clerks, but the disappearance of the clerks—the impossibility of leading the life of a clerk under present conditions."

Trotsky has said that all through history the mind limps after reality. It is another way of saying that the intellectual cannot avoid the economic conditions of his time; he cannot ignore them—for they will not ignore him. In one way or another he must compound with circumstances. But to describe the exact nature of the dilemma, a metaphor more elaborate than Trotsky's is necessary. Reality is a manifold: a four-pronged magnet (of matter, sensation, intellect, and intuition) and the same lines of force run through the parallel prongs.

The material organization of life is the basic fact: to that extent an intellectual can accept the Marxian dialectic. But though I admit the virtues of this method of reasoning, it would be better for me to drop all pretensions of generality and approach the matter as an intellectual, as one who has definite preferences in art and therefore in life. The Marxian would call such preferences bourgeois prejudices, but that is precisely where we differ. Art is a discipline—"a symbolic discipline," as Wyndham Lewis has so well described it. Now a discipline is always practiced for the purpose of putting order in the place of chaos, tidiness in the place of sloppiness—though why one should prefer order to disorder is a philosophical question for which I have no ready answer; it is perhaps another—perhaps the fundamental—bourgeois prejudice. But the sense of order is the principle of our being as artists—the principle of style and composition and of every virtue in art. I want to apply the same principle to life, and in doing so I stick to the aesthetic motive and do not need an ethical sanction. But once we attempt to apply this aesthetic standard to life—this principle of

order, of symbolic discipline—then, I contend (and regret I do not carry the agreement of Mr. Wyndham Lewis), then we are bound to take sides—if not in the front line of the political struggle, at least in support.

What in the attitude of our post-war socialists probably repelled me most directly was their incapacity to appreciate the significance of the artist's approach. To me it seemed elementary that a belief in Marx should be accompanied by a belief in, say, Cézanne; and that the development of art since Cézanne should interest the completely revolutionary mind as much as the development of socialist theory since Proudhon. I wanted to discuss, not only Sorel and Lenin, but also Picasso and Joyce. But no one saw the connection. Each isolated on his separate prong denied the relevance of the force animating the other prongs. No one could see that it was the same force that was transforming the whole of reality—of our interpretation of reality I ought rather to say. To me it seemed just as important to destroy the established bourgeois ideals in literature, painting, and architecture as it was to destroy the established bourgeois ideals in economics.

In a preface to a book on the principles of modern art (*Art Now.* Harcourt, Brace, 1933), under the shadow, then oppressive, of the German counter-revolution, I made an attempt to dissociate revolutionary art and revolutionary politics. It is quite true, as I stated, that the majority of modern artists are "neither Jews nor Communists, not racialists or politicians of any kind. They are just artists, and, if anything, the more *modern* they are in spirit as artists, the more disinterested and detached they become." That cannot be denied; and my further statement is equally true —that the modernity of modern art is the result of developments within the technique and science of art. "The great artists who have determined the course of modern art," I wrote, "Constable, Turner, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso—have been, and are, singularly devoid of ideologies of any kind. They live in their vision and their paint, and follow the inevitable course dictated by their sensibility." These statements, I repeat, are true enough, and in their context at least rhetorically justified. But in another context—the narrow context of the conditions deplored by Benda, the wider context of the general conditions of historical necessity—my statements ignore the fundamental (and fundamentally true) thesis of the Marxian dialectic—the thesis expressed by my image of the four-pronged magnet.

That the Marxian dialectic, as applied to art, is by no means clear in its workings is shown by the Marxian critics themselves. On the one hand, we have, for example, Carl Einstein interpreting the Cubist movement in general, and Braque in particular, as an inevitable outcome of the transition from individual to collective values in society (*Georges Braque*. London: Zwemmer, 1934). The images of reality characteristic of capitalist society must be discarded, and in their place the modern artist must create the images of a new conception of reality. Cubism in its first phase is the first step in the process of destruction, but its tectonic element—what it retains of formal structure and geometric measure—is a residue of old prejudices, a last safeguard against the unknown; it still shows a trace of the classical fear of ecstasy. But in his later work an artist like Braque passes beyond such limitations, into a world of hallucination. The conscious or reasoning self is entirely destroyed, or superseded, and the painter expresses a visionary reality, devoid of any mundane (bourgeois) associations. The aesthetic criterion is overcome by the force of the creative invention; the picture becomes a "psychogram." And by the force of the same argument it ceases, presumably, to be a work of art! Thus the dialectical method in art criticism leaves us with an art which is not so much art as an instrument of derationalization, and we are bound to ask how such an art can ever become the synthetic expression of a proletarian culture. Mr. Einstein would argue that a proletarian art is for the moment impossible, and therefore the question does not arise. The importance of contemporary art is purely negative: it aims at a dissolution of conventional notions of reality. It clears the deck for the collective art of the future.

The examination which another Marxian critic, Max Raphael, makes of another modern painter, Picasso, leads to a different conclusion (*Proudhon, Marx, Picasso*. Paris, 1933). Picasso is a more complicated case than Braque, but so far as his descriptive analysis of this most typical of modern artists goes, Raphael's Picasso does not differ greatly from Einstein's Braque. The difference lies in the interpretation of the facts. For whereas Einstein sees in Braque a forerunner of the future proletarian art, Raphael finds in Picasso merely the last phase of a decadent bourgeois art—at best, a substitution of metaphysical intuition for impressionistic sensualism; but definitely within the European tradition, and definitely reactionary. His

recourse to negro art, to classical art, to "super-reality," are so many flights from reason—from the implications of a rational view of life. His art is not a simple eclecticism, but a new form of reactionary bourgeois art. The series: negroid, antique, medieval—all phases of Picasso's development—express first his fear of tradition, then his precipitate flights back into its bosom. Picasso's many-sided development only displays so many futile efforts to solve the problem left unsolved by the nineteenth century—the creation of an art based on economic reality, on the emergent social forces of the modern period. Which is to say no more than that Picasso has remained completely unconscious of the class struggle—the fact I was compelled to affirm in *Art Now*.

Trotsky somewhere warns us of the necessity, the difficult necessity, of distinguishing between the true and the false revolutionary. That discrimination is just as necessary in modern art as in modern politics. In the modern tradition of painting—ever since painting revolted, like poetry, against the artificiality and irrelevance of the academic tradition of the eighteenth century—there are a number of individual artists whose aims and whose achievements have step by step built up a new conception of reality—a conception of reality totally opposed to the bourgeois standards of the period. Constable began a movement which includes Courbet, Daumier, Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Seurat. The perspective this side of Cézanne is more difficult to see, but in that tradition I would place an artist so coherent and so consistent as Juan Gris. Against that tradition, catering for quite a different public (for a *bourgeois* public, in short) you have not only the commonplace art of the academies, but various aspects of dilettantism (neo-classicism, romanticism, impressionism) all of which have little to do with the art of the future.

I have traced this revolutionary movement in the art of painting because there, I think, the tradition is much more clearly discerned. In literature the tradition is confused by all kinds of subjective cross-currents. We might take, for example, the sequence Balzac-Zola-Dostoevsky-Joyce, and suppose that these names represented a fairly connected tradition leading up to the revolutionary attitude of the present day. But against that tradition we might place the sequence Scott-Turgenev-Henry James-Proust, and though Scott at one end might be dismissed as romanticism and Proust

at the other end as dilettantism, yet the central figures of Turgenev and James represent values not so easily disposed of. Note, too, how the two traditions are in dialectical opposition—Balzac presupposing and being conditioned by Scott, Zola by Turgenev, James by Dostoevsky; until the dialectic breaks down in the transitional and wholly disintegrated forms of Proust and Joyce. The nearer literature comes to revolutionary realities, the less competent it becomes; perhaps because the necessary aesthetic detachment is impossible in an art so near to life. The very objectivity of the painter's craft—its lack of precisely what we call "literary" qualities—makes it a much better index of the mutations of the aesthetic sensibility.

However interpreted, the main tradition, and the only tradition which is revolutionary in essence, in its fundamental vision of life, that is the tradition which must be integrated with the social revolution. Revolutionary politicians should never forget this axiomatic truth (guaranteed by the whole evidence of history): *there can be no permanent society without a supporting culture.* A proletarian economy without a proletarian art is a practical futility. Culture, and not material civilization, is the continuing force in a society.

The issue, as presented by a consideration of these facts, has clearly to do with the relation of the individual to society. The artist is always an individualist, in some sense. But the sense is very different at different times. It is not the same sense in the twelfth century and in the nineteenth century. There is, in fact, an important distinction to be made between individuality and individualism—between the unique capacity of the individual as artist and what Gorky calls "the instinctive anarchy of the individual," which latter meaning is the basis of Plato's objection to the poet. I am not sure that this distinction will not resolve, in the end, into the general contrast between classicism and romanticism, but I do not, on this occasion, wish to be tempted by such a dangerous analogy—though it would provide one more illustration of my persistent desire to accommodate the individual or romantic artist within a classical framework. My immediate object is to suggest that the main tradition of modern art is a coherent attitude towards reality—that reality which, to quote Gorky once more, "is created by the inexhaustible and intelligent will of man."

Trotsky, who has dealt with these questions more intelligently than

most modern critics, has a clear definition of the artist's individuality. In *Literature and Revolution* he writes:

> The truth is that even if individuality is unique, it does not mean that it cannot be analyzed. Individuality is a welding together of tribal, national, class, temporary and institutional elements, and, in fact, it is in the uniqueness of this welding together, in the proportions of this psycho-chemical mixture, that individuality is expressed. One of the most important tasks of criticism is to analyze the individuality of the artist (that is, his art) into its component elements, and to show their correlations. In this way, criticism brings the artist closer to the reader, who also has more or less of a "unique soul," "artistically" unexpressed, "unchosen," but none the less representing a union of the same elements as does the soul of the poet. So it can be seen that what serves as a bridge from soul to soul is not the unique, but the common. Only through the common is the unique known; the common is determined in man by the deepest and most persistent conditions which make up his "soul," by the social conditions of education, of existence, of work, and of associations.

With this passage I would like the reader to compare Gorky's statement on the same subject, in a letter from which I have already quoted[1].

> Individualism sprang from the soil of "private ownership." Generations upon generations of men have created collectives, and always the individual, for one reason or another, has stood apart, breaking away from the collective and at the same time from reality where the new is ever in the making. He has been creating his own unique, mystical and incomprehensible god, set up for the sole purpose of justifying the right of the individual to independence and power. Here mysticism becomes indispensable, because the right of the individual to absolute rule, to "autocracy," cannot be explained by reason. Individualism endowed its god with the qualities of omnipotence, infinite wisdom and absolute intelligence—with qualities which man would like to possess, but which develop only through the reality created by collective labor. *This reality always lags behind the human mind,* for the

[1] "Reply to an Intellectual," in *On Guard for the Soviet Union.* English trans. (London: Martin Lawrence, 1933), p. 90.

mind which creates it is slowly but constantly perfecting itself. If this were not so, reality would, of course, make people contented, and the state of contentment is a passive one. Reality is created by the inexhaustible and intelligent will of man, and its development will never be arrested.

I must apologize for these long quotations, but this question of the relation of the individual to the collective society of which he is a member is the fundamental issue, in art as well as in politics. It is the fundamental question *within* religion too, for what is the Reformation but the affirmation of the autocratic will of the individual against the collective rule of the Church? Philosophically it is the issue between Scholasticism and Cartesianism, between materialism and idealism. But before passing on to the general issue, I would like to point out a curious contradiction between the statements quoted from Trotsky and Gorky—something more serious than their (or their translators') inconsistent use of the words "individuality" and "individualism." I have previously quoted Trotsky's blunt summary of his general point of view: "all through history, mind limps after reality." "Reality," says Gorky in the sentence I have italicised, "always lags behind the human mind." Presumably these two statements could be reconciled by the dialectical method, for dialectic, in the words of Lenin, is "the study of how there can be and are . . . identical opposites."

Dialectic apart, there is a sense in which both Gorky and Trotsky may be right. The relation between mind and reality, between the individual and the community, is not one of precedence; it is more one of action and reaction, a process of tacking against the wind. The current of reality is strong, and troubles the mind; but the mind embraces this contrary force, and is lifted higher, and carried farther, by the very opposition. And so with the individual and the community. Complete freedom means inevitable decadence. The mind must feel an opposition, must be tamped with hard realities if it is to have any blasting power.

For this reason I think we must look askance at the word "liberal," preferring perhaps the title "realist." A realist I would define as a man who has learnt to distrust any term to which he cannot attach a perfectly definite meaning. He particularly distrusts those ideological phrases, catchwords, slogans, and symbols under cover of which most of the political

activities of today take place. He has a very bitter memory of phrases like "a war to end war," and "making the world safe for democracy." As a realist I look with intense suspicion on words like "democracy," "race," "nation," "empire," "proletariat," "party," "unity," "decency," "morality," "tradition," "duty," etc. I prefer words like "reason," "intelligence," "order," "justice," "plan," "action," and "objective"; words equally abstract, but representing tidier habits of mind. The word "liberalism" would naturally be suspect; but it has associations with the word "liberty," and in the name of liberty most of what I value in life and literature has been achieved. What, then, of this word "liberty"?

Let me admit that it represents an idea to which I am passionately attached; but let me claim at the same time that it is a word I have looked at with a disenchanted, a realistic, eye. I know that it denotes many things to many people, and that many of its interpretations are worthless. In short, I know that the idealistic interpretation of the word is quite impracticable. Liberty, in that sense, implies anarchy; and though anarchy is logically and philosophically a very attractive doctrine, it is not a practical policy in the present stage of the world's economic development. Government—that is to say, control of the individual in the interests of the community—is inevitable. Moreover, our general condition is so desperate that such control is bound to be very extensive and very strict.

What might be called the tyranny of facts—the present necessity which most of us are under to struggle for our very existence, our food, our shelter and other no less essential amenities of life—this tyranny is so severe, but so customary, that we ought to be prepared to consider a restriction of liberty in other directions if in this respect some release were promised. I accept the economic analysis of Douglas and Orage, and believe, moreover, that the productive capacity of industry is so great that our primary need is an economics of consumption—a system which will put into operation the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and ask in return, not the tokens nor the labor upon which tokens are based, but social faith. I say social faith to keep to the biblical analogy, but actually and realistically I mean social credit. That this particular policy must emerge like a mouse from this mountain of intellectual discussion is, I am afraid, a scenic effect beyond my control. I would only suggest that there is another image which

would suit the circumstances equally well: the trickle on the face of the dam. It is one of the bitterest facts that an intellectual has to accept—that any remedy or policy based on practical reason stands very little chance of securing consideration, just because it is rational, and not idealistic—not, that is to say, vague enough to allow a multitude of interpretations, nor symbolical enough to rouse blind instinctive responses.

In all that concerns the planning of economic life, the building up of a rational mode of living in a social community, there can be no question of absolute liberty. For, so long as we live in a community, in all practical affairs the greatest good of the greatest number is also the greatest good of the individual. As intellectuals (a penniless class, it is true) we must be willing to surrender all material rights—to let the state take our property and put it into the common fund. Even if we have wealth, we can do this with a happy conscience, for material possessions were always a menace to spiritual liberty. In a certain sense, therefore, we can welcome the totalitarian state, whether in its fascist or its Bolshevist form. The totalitarian state as an economic structure is an efficient machine designed to facilitate the complex business of living together in a community. But actually this rational and practical concept of the state—a concept that need be nothing but rational and practical—is combined with various distinct ideologies: in Russia with the Marxian ideology of dialectical materialism, in Italy with the ideology of nationalism, in Germany with the even more dangerous ideology of race. In the name of these ideologies, the intellectual liberty of the individual is sacrificed. Now, whether we accept Trotsky's or Gorky's "identical opposite," whether we regard the individual as determined by the community, or the community as determined by the individual, the sacrifice is in either case intolerable.

Intellectual liberty—the liberty to pursue individual trends of thought and to publish these for the interest or amusement of our fellow-men—is not defended by me in a spirit of vague idealism. The political ideology of liberty is liberalism, or *laissez-faire,* which is the doctrine most suited to a predatory capitalism. But the doctrine of liberty will be a living doctrine as long as our civilization survives; for on our liberty depends the life of our civilization. And depends in the most practical and demonstrable way. The proof must naturally be historical; and from history, in all its

aspects, emerges the incontrovertible law which Mill expressed in these words: "The initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from individuals; generally at first from some one individual." Or, negatively: "The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement, being in unceasing antagonism to that disposition to aim at something better than customary, which is called, according to circumstances, the spirit of liberty, or that of progress or improvement." I am not as fond as Mill of the word "progress"; it is not very real as a concept applied to the last five thousand years of history, and it is foolish to indulge in anything but relatively short-term policies for the human race. But I do cling to the fact of vitality; for on the vitality of a civilization depends just simply the will to live—at least, for an intellectual. I know that some of my contemporaries can complacently sacrifice this will; but that is a form of spiritual treachery in which I have no desire to participate. In history, the stagnant waters, whether of custom or of despotism, support no life; life depends on the agitation set up by a few eccentric individuals. For the sake of that life, that vitality, a community must take certain risks, must admit a modicum of heresy. It must live dangerously if it would live at all.

At first sight it would seem that countries like Germany, Italy, and Russia satisfy this condition. One could hardly complain of social stagnation in any of them; and the effects of intellectual stagnation require a few years to show themselves. The economic issues are in such countries confused by political opportunism. But one issue, and one only, emerges when all temporary and tactical considerations have been dismissed: the issue between capitalism and communism. Even fascism, if we are to believe its theoretical exponents, is socialistic, the aim being to control the means of production and distribution for the general benefit of the community, and therefore to restrict all forms of monopoly and individual power. The essential doctrine of all reforming parties is communism; they only differ in the sincerity with which they profess the ideal; and in the means they adopt to realize it. Some find the means more attractive than the end.

In considering the practical consequences of such a doctrine, the only kind of leveling we need really fear is an intellectual leveling. The society I desire and will and plan is a leisure society—a society giving full

opportunity for the education and development of the mind. Mind only requires time and space—to differentiate itself. The worst conditions of intellectual uniformity and stupidity are created by conditions of poverty and lack of leisure. The ordinary man under our present unjust system has to have his education stopped before his mind is fully opened. From the age of fourteen he is caught up in an endless treadmill; he has neither time nor opportunity to feed his undeveloped senses—he must snatch at the diuretic pabulum of the newspapers and the radio, and as a consequence, tread the mill with more urgency.

In the classless leisure society, the mind of every individual will have at least the opportunity to expand in breadth and depth, and it will be one of the main functions of government to supply the instruments of culture. In the society of the future, the most important posts in the Government will be the Ministries of Education and of Fine Art. Whether the circumstances will lead to an intensified religious life is a speculation I must leave to others; but I will present those who are interested in this aspect of the question with the following dilemma; if religion is a consolation or compensation for the insufficiencies of this vale of tears (the "romanticism of pessimism," as Benda calls it) then no doubt it will suffer by the abolition of poverty; if, on the other hand, religion is the life of contemplation, the fruit of pure meditation, spiritual joy, then it can only prosper in a society free from poverty, pride, and envy.

By now I have exposed myself, as never before; for though a poet's social ideas are implicit in his poetry and poetic criticism, very few people take the trouble to trace them out. Now that they are explicit, I shall be given a convenient label; dismissed, shall we say, as a "romantic idealist." It is, however, a reversible label, and on the other side is written "scientific realist." Because a man believes in the capacity of the human reason to introduce order into chaos, must he always be treated as an impracticable fool? I do not believe in the perfectibility of man. But I do believe in the controllability, or as I would rather say, the persuadability of man. I believe that we have the power and the instruments to bring about a society in which there will be no poverty and no social injustice; where the mind

and body shall have free scope to develop; where law and order and beauty shall be the outward and classical expression of a spirit free, vital, and romantic. These are incompatibles, it will be said; but the true dialectic of history proves the contrary.

THE WISH BOOK

George Milburn

Six thousand tons of paper . . . whirling through great power presses . . . using seven hundred and fifty pounds of ink an hour. More than a thousand printers . . . working night and day. Machines with great mechanical fingers sorting . . . gathering . . . and binding papers into books . . . Four hundred artists and camera men making thousands of illustrations . . . A great battery of two hundred typewriters clicking out the true story of value . . . And behind these facts other things you cannot see . . .

THE SUN was blistering the sanded green paint on the M. K. & T. railway station. A gray farm wagon drawn by two mousy mules turned off the dust-cushioned road and came gritting along the graveled platform. It stopped on the shady east side of the depot. The driver eased his blue hulk to the ground and went into the waiting room for Whites.

He gaped a moment at the empty slat benches. Flies droned against the paint-sealed windows. There was a muffled chatter of telegraph in the room beyond. The ticket window was shut; so he lumbered on through to the sunny side of the station. He went round and stuck his head in at the Negro waiting room, off which the office door opened.

"Hello, Mr. Conklin! Hello!" he bawled.

The station agent, sweltering in a balbriggan undershirt, came to the office door.

"Mr. Conklin, is ary a passel here yit for W. F. Slover?"

"Sure is, Homer; come in on the 4:30 local this evenin'."

"Hot diggety! I shore am proud to hear that. We been lookin' for our ship-mint over a week, and it riles Pap to have me lay out and drive to town so much."

"O. K., Homer. You sign right here on this waybill—if you caint sign, make your mark—and I'll go get your freight."

Homer clamped his tongue in a corner of his mouth and painfully began tracing his name on the wrong line. The station agent rolled back the freighthouse door and brought out a small red-labeled box.

"Careful how you handle this, Homer," he said. "It's marked explosives. What's that bulshevik pappy of your'n fixin' to do—start him a bumb factory?"

"No, sir, Mr. Conklin; them is shotgun shells. I been waitin' on them so as I could go huntin'."

"Well, if you was so anxious for a few shotgun shells, looks to me like you'd 'a' bought some here in town. The hardware ain't quit handlin' shotgun shells has it?"

"Shucks, Mr. Conklin, my Pappy won't buy nothin' here in town if he can order it. Why I recollect onct the old womern had the neuralgy in her jaw and she had to suffer it six days while Pa was makin' up a order to Sears Sawbuck for some aspireen tablets. Anyhow they charge too much for shells at the hardware. And you got to figger, too, nothing like that caint be sent in the mail; so if anybody orders four boxes, why Sears pays the freight. But that's jist on shotgun shells, because they caint come by mail."

"All right, Homer; there's your shotgun shells. Now you can get on back to your cotton pickin' instid of pesterin' the life out of me about whe'r your freight has come."

"I ain't goin' to pick no more cotton this day, Mr. Conklin. I'm goin' huntin' tonight—and maybe take in the dance."

"Where's the dance at? Odd Fellows Hall?"

"No, I didn't mean no round dance. I meant the big square dance out to Gutterman's place. I allowed you'd heard about Gutterman's dance, Mr. Conklin. You know Bessie, that's Gutterman's old womern, she got

ketched a-sellin' bootleg here last spring and Judge Throgmorton give her six months in the county calaboose. So Bessie's gettin' out today, and Herman is th'owin' a big square dance to celebrate."

"Well, Homer, if you aim to get home in time to put on your best bib and tucker, you're going to have to h'ist your tail some, ain't you?"

"Aw, I don't know wh'er I'll even go to the dance or not, Mr. Conklin. I jist said that. I wanted to go, but you know how set in his notions Pap is. I was jist schemin', though, on the way to town—maybe if I went huntin' tonight I could slip off and look in up at Gutterman's and maybe dance me a few sets. But don't you never name it to Pap, or he'd take the hide off'n me!"

"O. K. Homer. Give them gals an exter swing for me."

"I shore will, Mr. Conklin. You come see us some time."

IF YOU WISH

write in your own language. Wysylajcie wasze listy po polsku jerzeli wam sie podoba. Schrijf uwe brieven in het Hollandsch als het u past. Ecrivez en français si vous préférez. Se Lei preferisce scrive in italiano. Napište vaši psani v Českém jazyku jestli si tak přejete. Schreiben Sie uns Ihre Aufträge in Deutsch, wenn Sie wünschen. Skrifva dere brefva på Svenskt om detta är lättere for dere. Escriba en español si lo desea. Skriv paa Norsk eller Dansk hvis det er lettere . . . . .

Only one passenger got off the 5:45 that afternoon—a blond lank man who wore a new straw hat and a wrinkled Palm Beach suit. Spike Callahan, the jitney driver, did not even seek a fare. He raced his motor and swung his Dodge sedan away from the station. The lone passenger yelled and struck up a loose-jointed sprint down the platform. Spike put on his brakes.

R. W. E. Ledbetter, editor of the Conchartee County *Democrat,* panted alongside the car. "You drivin' over to town, Spike?"

The hawk-faced jitney driver grunted, "Yah."

"Care if I ride over with you?"

"Naw. Get in," Spike said, but he did not move to flip open a door as he would have for a paying passenger.

Ledbetter trotted round and climbed into the front seat. He mopped his face as the car sped away. "I could've walked it in ten minutes, but it's so all-fired hot today and I'm anxious to get back to the *Democrat* office and see if Red Currie has got the paper out yet. I was called to Tulsa on business today. I hate to leave Red Currie with so much responsibility, but this was just a case of have-to. Red's a good boy, all right, but he is like ever' sorrel-top ever I saw: little too quick on the trigger."

"He's too damn' smart-alecky to suit me!" Spike snarled. His blotched lean face was set and his bitter lips had gone white "Soon as you learnt him to run that linotype he got too big for his britches. I went in there today with a piece for the paper and he got awful smart with me. Said I'd have to *pay* to get it in."

The editor was indignant. "He did! Red Currie said that? What was the piece about, Spike?"

The taxi-driver cleared his throat and kept looking straight ahead. "It was just something the wife wrote about our baby."

Ledbetter's face took on a funereal expression and he reached over and laid his hand on the jitney-driver's shoulder.

"Spike," he said, "I sure was sorry to hear about your baby last week. That sure was tough. I didn't get out to the funeral myself—we was a day late with the *Democrat* last week—but Mrs. Ledbetter went, and she said it was beautiful. This makes the second you've lost, don't it? Well, I always say it's just as tough to lose a child right at the start as it is one ten or fifteen years old."

The hard look flickered out of the jitney-driver's dark eyes for a moment. "Yeah," he murmured, "it's tough."

"Have you got it with you, that what the wife wrote? Red Currie ain't editor of the *Democrat* yet by a long shot."

"I didn't aim to mention it again," Spike said bashfully, "but the wife wrote it herself and she thought maybe you'd appreciate it enough to print it in the paper." He fumbled in his shirt pocket and drew out a blue-lined leaf of pencil paper.

The editor unfolded it and began reading in a rapid mutter:

We wish to thank our many friends, neighbors, singers, and Bro. Batenfield for their kind deeds and sympathy shown during our bereavement of our beloved baby daughter. Also for the beautiful floral offerings.

She was a little angel,
Sent to us for only a day,
God wanted another angel,
So He taken our Baby away.
Last Tuesday Arlene was born,
Ere Wednesday she was gone.
She never knew no worldly harms
Ere Jesus taken her to his arms.

(Signed)

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Callahan
Chester Junior Callahan

The jitney driver said uneasily, "I told the wife she'd ought to sign it 'Spike Callahan and wife,' so folks'd be sure to reco'nize the name, but she held out that just the initials was more proper. What about that?"

"Either way would be nice," R. W. E. Ledbetter said. "Now, Spike, we can run the missus' poem free of charge, but fact of the matter is, Red was right—we do make a small nominal charge for cards of thanks. Only twenty-five cents."

Spike Callahan's face went hard again. He gave a little sneering sniff. "I guess you was going to pay me two-bits when you got in my taxi to be hauled over to town?"

Editor Ledbetter gulped. "Why, no, Spike; I just thought so long as you was coming over to town anyway and didn't have no load you wouldn't mind me riding with you. But—well, sure, if that's the way you look at it, why I'll waive our customary charge. That reminds me, though —before I forget I want to jot down another item."

He reached in his coat for a pencil and scrawled hastily on the scrap of paper: "Ye ed. businessed in Tulsa Friday."

HERE'S A SIZZLING STYLE

They're a WOW! No fooling! these pants have "IT"! They're really trousers and semivest combined and are they stylish? Say! they were born in Hollywood and in two weeks had spread like a conflagration all the way to Fifth Avenue! The double-breasted vest effect is what they're all raving about. Vest is a part of the waistband! Fancy buttoned sidepockets, adjustable strap in back, and 22-inch cuff bottoms carry out the stylish scheme. All wool and silk in a rich brown stripe. Sizes 28 to 36 in. waist and 28 to 34 in. inseam. State measurements.

45F8575 . . . $3.65

Red Currie came down the back alley carrying two pleated gray blocks of Conchartee County *Democrats*. The ink was still moist on the newsprint. Fivefinger Earp's mail truck was parked at the back door of the post office and Fivefinger was going back and forth, unloading the 5:45 mail.

As Red walked round the truck to get in the back door with the papers, he noticed Irene Pirtle standing at the front corner of the post office. His large ears turned crimson and the color seeped over his peaked face. She was the prettiest girl in his high school class.

"Oh, Red," Irene called, "are you going in the back way to mail those papers? Would you do me a favor?"

The blush deepened on Red's face, but he answered smartly, "Sure! Any flavor you want—lemon or vanilla?"

Shrill laughter parted her bright doll mouth and she gave her hempen bob a backward toss to show the warm curve of her throat with its little creases of moist powder.

"Cr-r-a-a-zy!" she shrieked.

Red Currie, saffron-faced, walked over to where she was.

"Say, Red," she said in a low, sober voice, "I'm expecting a package on this mail. I want to be sure and get it before Papa comes for the mail. So would you please ask Mr. Shannon if anything come for me and if it did, get it for me while you're in there?"

"Sure I will, Irene. I'm expecting a package myself and I have to ask about that anyhow. So I can get yours easy if it come."

"I cer'nly would appreciate it, Red."

She idled against the alley side of the building while he went into the post office through the back way. A few minutes later he was back with a large brown envelope and a wide cardboard box.

"Yours sure is light," he said, handing her the envelope. "What's it got in it?"

She giggled. "That's for me to know and you to find out! What you got in yours?"

"Tell me what's in yours and I'll tell you what's in mine."

"I'd *show* you what's in mine if you'd show me what's in yours!"

"Aw, naw. You'll see mine on me soon enough. I guess I'll put mine on tonight and take in a square dance out here in the country. Just to give the hicks a treat."

"I'd wear mine to a square dance," she said, wistfully arching her plucked brows, "if I had anybody to take me."

"Heck, what's the matter with *me*? I'll take you!"

"It's funny you never did ask me before."

"I would of ask you before, but I thought you was stuck on Eagle Catoosa."

"Gosh, no, kid! Papa won't let me go with Eagle no more. Besides Eagle is sparkin' the Widow Holcomb now. That big old fat Indian slob ain't nothing in my young life."

"Well, would you go with me to this square dance if I was to come by for you tonight?"

"Maybe. But you got to let me see what's in your package."

"All right—if you'll show me what's in yours."

She tore open the envelope flap and pulled out a garment of flesh-tinted rayon. She brushed it lightly with her finger tips to restore three small silk rosebuds. He bent forward and peered closely at the shimmering cloth.

"I don't see yet what it is," he complained.

She laughed boldly. "Step-ins, you foolish!"

"Aw, do things like that have *rosebuds* sewed on 'em?"

"You wouldn't kid me, would you? Now let's see yours."

Still a little shocked, he broke the paper tape that sealed his cardboard box. He took off the lid and tore the tissue wrapping away from a fold of brown cassimere with gaudy silk stripes interwoven.

"What's that?" she breathed.

"Sizzle pants," he said proudly. "The latest thing out."

"*Sizzle* pants?" she gasped. "I bet they look funny on you."

"Funny! Wha' ya mean, funny?" he asked huffily. "They're a Hollywood sensation. Trouble with this town is, it don't keep up with the styles. I don't expect these mossbacks around here to appreciate snappy clothes."

"Well, I cer'nly am anxious to see them on you."

"Ain't you got nothing better to do, little missy, than to stand here in the alley talking to a boy?"

They both jumped and looked round at the scrawny man who had slipped up behind them. He had watery pink eyes, and tobacco darkened the sour creases at his mouth.

"Oh, hello, Papa," Irene Pirtle said faintly.

"You march right on up to the filling station, little lady," Ira Pirtle said in a crabbed voice. "I'll attend to you there!"

"Oh, foot!" Irene said, and in a quick whisper to Red added, "Seven-thirty."

IF YOU WISH

to return this merchandise—Write us just a brief note telling us what is wrong and what you want us to do about it. Remember we want the order to be perfectly satisfactory to you. If you want to return the item and have your money refunded, we are ready to do it, but it helps us to know why the order has not pleased you . . . .

The sad banshee whistle of the 5:45 came trailing across the flatlands south of town as Spike Callahan's Dodge rustled over the white chat drive beside his rented bungalow. He got out stiffly and walked around by the sunny back porch. A baby boy in clean gingham rompers was knocking toys about in a play-pen.

"Daddy's home, Junior," Spike called in an oddly gentle voice. "You got a big old fat kiss for Daddy?"

The little boy turned his head toward the voice and gurgled. As he looked up, the setting sun struck him full in the face. The child met the

strong light without blinking his milk-blue eyes. He was blind. He stretched out his arms, groping for his father. One of his tiny hands was a stub with five red buttons in place of fingers.

Spike fondled his son and played with him awhile before he went into the house. His wife, a large blonde woman, stood at the gas range, frying steaks. She was dressed in a crisp, green wash-frock, and she looked pale and cool even in the sultry kitchen. A breakfast nook between the kitchen and the parlor was laid for a meal.

"How you feel by now, Kate?" Spike asked as he hung up his hat.

"Pretty good, I guess," she said without looking up. "The heat makes me feel a little faint at times."

"Well, don't go and overdo yourself." He drew water at the sink and began washing his hands. "Say did you get that stuff fixed up to send back to Monkey Wards?"

She was lifting hot biscuits out of the oven. She did not answer at once. He was opening his mouth to speak again when she said quietly, "This is only the second day I've been out of bed."

"Yeah, I know, but if we put off sending that stuff back much longer we're li'ble to have trouble getting our money back. And we sure could use that $4.59 we got tied up there. Business is punk."

"I'll get the box ready tonight," she said.

"Did you save them papers that come with the order?"

"Yes, the papers are stuck in the catalogue."

They sat down at the breakfast nook and ate in silence. After the meal Spike lighted a cigarette. He sat moodily picking his teeth. The gray stalks of smoke trailed from his nostrils. She began taking up the soiled dishes.

"Aren't you going to eat your salad?" she asked.

"Naw," he said, chirping through his teeth, "you know I never do touch that rabbit fodder."

She put the dishes in the sink. Then she reached up and took from the shelf above a nickeled alarm clock. She began winding it.

"What time does your watch say?" she asked. "I've got to set the alarm so I'll be sure to give Junior his medicine tonight."

He took out his watch and glanced at it. "Five after seven. How is Junior, you think?"

"Those sores don't seem to be healing up at all. Don't you reckon we ought to have Dr. Jenkins look at him again?"

Spike twisted his lips and gave a sardonic snort. "Hell of a lot of good Doc Jenkins done me! You wait and see wh'er this dope we got now don't help.—Say, I give Ledbetter that piece you wrote. He bummed a ride over from the 5:45 this afternoon. Then he had the nerve to want to charge for printing what you wrote in his lousy paper. First that Red Currie in there wanted two-bits to put it in the paper. He got awful sassy—if he'd 'a'said much more I'd 'a'slapped me the snot out of that red-headed brat. I got Ledbetter told all right. He said it would be in next week's paper. Person'ly, I don't much care."

Her back was turned, but he could tell from the way her large shoulders were quivering that she had started crying again. She stood at the sink weeping softly. There were tears in his eyes, too, as he got up and started toward her. Then he scowled and crossed over to where his hat was hung. He crammed it on and went out the back way, banging the screen door.

She blew her nose and went to the door. "Spike," she quavered, "why don't you stay home tonight and help me put Junior away."

"Ah, naw," he said, getting into the car. "I better get on up town awhile and see if I caint pick up a few nickels. Look for me back when you see me comin'."

SHINE AS THE STARS DO

in Hollywood autographed Fashions. Authentic up-to-the-minute styles worn by famous film stars. These copies of your favorite stars' very own dresses, coats, neckwear, shoes, hoisery, foundations, and bathing suits are offered only by Sears Roebuck. You'll know them on the pages of this catalogue by the actual photographs of beautiful film stars. You'll know them by their special labels bearing the signature of the popular star who wears it . . .

Pirtle's filling station was the brightest spot on Broadway. It was garish with yellow and red paint by day. It was garlanded with colored electric bulbs by night. The illuminated glass barrels of its three pumps showed for sale red (ethyl), white (untreated), and blue (tractor) gasoline.

Ira Pirtle sat propped in a hickory chair outside the door of his three-cornered office. He held in his lap a new mail-order catalogue. He licked his lips as he leafed slowly through it, drooling over the buxom women pictured on the underwear pages. A car drove into the pool of light and he hurriedly plopped the book down on the concrete floor. He lowered his tilted chair and went over to the gas pumps.

"Give me three gallons of the white, Ira," Spike Callahan said, getting out of the car.

Ira, his moist eyes on the graduated glass, unhooked the hose and began lowering gasoline into Spike's tank.

Spike had his pant-legs pulled up slightly, looking at his shoes under the light. "Ira," he said, "my clutch is leaking oil on me some way. You got an old rag I could wipe off my shoe with?"

Ira hung the gas nozzle back on its hook. "I don't know wh'er I got ary rag here, Spike. Seems like I get so many calls for rags, I just caint keep any on hand."

He went into his office. A moment later he came to the door and said, "This be all right?" He tossed out a begrimed wisp of cloth.

Spike caught it. "Yeah, this is all right. But what the hell! Say, Ira, you're getting pretty ritzy, ain't you, handin' out women's silk undies for customers to wipe their shoes on. How come that, Ira?"

Ira Pirtle did not smile. "I'll tell you how come that," he said grimly. "That daughter of mine's gettin' to where I caint do nothing with her. She come walking in here tonight and she had a parcel in her hand. I ast her what she had in that parcel and she claims she's got dress goods. I ast her to let me see and she says she ain't a-goin' to do it. So I snatched that parcel away from the little missy and looked for myself. And that's what was in it—that there what you got in your hands. Looky what it's got sewed on it! *Rosebuds*. Yes, sir, rosebuds! Dogged if I'm goin' to have ary a child of mine shamin' me by wearin' a garment like that. So I jist naturally ripped it up and throwed it right down on the floor and scrubbed it in the grease. I swan if I can figger out what the young 'uns of today is comin' to. Course that'n of mine never had had no mother to look after her, but I can tell you, she's not a-goin' to disgrace herse'f while I'm here to he'p it."

"That's right, Ira. You got to watch 'em close these days."

"Put that rag in your car, Spike, if you got any use for it. I'd just as soon not have it layin' around the station here."

"O.K., Ira. Now lend me your pliers and I'll see if I caint tighten this clutch up some way to stop that oil from workin' out."

"Here's some pliers. But pull over there by the greasing-rack so as other customers can drive up to the pumps."

Spike ran his car round to the other side of the station. While he was down on the floorboards, working, an expensive limousine stopped at the curb. A broad swarthy face called low, "Hey, Spike!"

Spike walked over to the other car, peering into the darkness.

"How's-a-boy, Eagle?"

"Sh-h-h!" Eagle Catoosa whispered. "Not so loud. I don't want Old Man Pirtle to know I'm out here. Listen, Spike, this is on the Q.T., see. I got a little job for you."

"How much is they in it?" Spike asked guardedly.

"What you say to five bucks, hunh?"

"Five bucks will be all right. What is it—murder?"

The big Indian chuckled and shoved a five-dollar bill into the jitney-driver's hand. "Naw! Listen, guy, Old Man Pirtle won't let Irene go with me no more because I cut the old man out with Mrs. Holcomb, see. Well, I want to take Irene out tonight anyhow. But she's went out to Gutterman's square dance with the red-headed guy that works in the printing office, see. So all I want you to do is drive out there and get Irene away from the square dance for me. I got reasons for not wanting to show there at Gutterman's tonight. All you have to do is just get Irene off to one side and tell her I'll be waitin' down there at that culvert below Gutterman's place with my parkin' lights on. She'll come right on down there. That kid is nuts over me."

"You say she's with Red Currie? I'm goin' to like this."

"Yeah, that bird thinks he's a hot rock. Well, you'll take care of that all right for me, won't you, Spike?"

"Sure, I'll take care of that for you, Eagle."

"Better take a few drinks on old Herman while you're out there. He's started up again and he's got some pretty fair stuff."

"Naw, I'm off of it, Eagle; doctor's orders."

"A few snorts of Herman's whiskey never hurt nobody."

"You might be right at that. Drive on ahead and I'll pass you on the way."

IF IT'S TWINS

Wards will send you an Exact Duplicate Layette Free. Twins are apt to happen . . . even in the best of well-regulated families! Not that they aren't welcome, no indeed! Because if there's anything better news than a brand-new baby—it's TWO brand-new babies!

Twilight deepened in the bungalow. After she had put the baby to sleep she wandered through the hot dark rooms. When she came to the bedroom she went over to the clothes closet and took down from the top shelf a cardboard box. She brought it into the living room and snapped on the silk-shaded table lamp.

She sat down and reached under the mission table for the mail-order catalogue that lay on the footboard. The large book opened at a place where a thin fold of wire-stapled invoice papers had been put away.

Tears wetted her cheeks as she began reading again—

PROVIDES HIS NECESSITIES

2 Bishop dresses, Cotton batiste, Lace trimmed.
3 flannel bands about ¼ wool, balance cotton.
12 birdseye diapers Hemmed 27 by 27 inch size.
1 Dress Hand Smocked Fine Quality Cotton Batiste.
2 Gertrudes, Amoskeag 1101 cotton flannel.
Shell stitched edges in pink or blue.
2 pairs hose mercerized cotton. Cream white.
1 baby book "Health and Care" . . . .
31D4512 . . . . . 39-piece Layette $4.59

She turned with sudden resolution to the pink index pages in the back of the book. Then she opened the catalogue on another page. It was headed in large letters:

ORDER WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT . . . BY MAIL!

She read the page again. Again she puzzled over the curious inklings she found there. Unlike those on any other page of the catalogue, the description of each item here was a little nest of hidden meanings.

She mumbled the bewildering words slowly as she read and her eyes were blank with despair. After a long time she lowered her head and laid her face on the open catalogue. She began to pray.

"Oh, dear God," she prayed, "I'm not sure, and I've got to be sure. You see everything that happens in the world, God, so won't you please help me. . . help me. . ."

IMPORTED CUCKOO CLOCK

Sears Cuckoo Clocks are Imported from the Black Forest of Germany. Stag's head and maple leaf top and front ornaments are hand-carved by families who have been doing carving for generations. Beautiful walnut finish. Ht., 19½ in., Width 13 in., 5 in. dial. Cuckoo appears to call hours and half-hours. One-day weight movement. 5F9314¼ . . . $14.45.

The finest room in Gutterman's three-roomed house was the built-on kitchen. The big brass oil lamp that hung from the ceiling had a mountain scene hand-painted on its white glass shade. The linoleum-covered floor seemed to be tesselated with blocks of red marble and green onyx. Splendid with nickel, huge with hot-water reservoir and overhead warming closets, a six-hole range took up one side of the room. The other side held a varnished oak cabinet with a vast, oval-windowed flour sifter and a polished zinc top.

Over on the wall near the kitchen cabinet a cuckoo clicked out of its ornate little hut and called once for the half-hour.

Spike Callahan put the big jar of whiskey back down on the kitchen table and looked at his watch. He went over to the cuckoo clock and moved the hands forward ten minutes.

He was alone in the kitchen. The door leading to the front room was open and through it came sounds of feet thudding on bare boards, shrill giggles and hoarse guffaws, the squeak and twang of fiddle and guitar being tuned, and glimpses of men and women milling past in their Sunday clothes.

Old Herman Gutterman's hearty voice could be heard calling: "Git yore podners fer a quadrille!"

The hubbub got louder, backs thumped against the wall, and then the noise went down. Old Herman was shouting them into their places: "Four couple right this way. Three more couple right over here. Two more couple this way. One more couple. . . All set now!"

Spike Callahan took another long pull at the whiskey jar, shuddered, and wiped his mouth on the back of his hand. He sat and stared moodily at the open back door.

Homer Slover came sneaking in out of the darkness carrying a double-barrel shotgun. When he saw Spike, a foolish grin spread over his big moon-face and he bobbled his head. "Reckon it'd be all right for me to go in there and dance jist wearin' these here overhalls?"

Spike gave him a drunken nod. "Sure, that's O. K., Homer! You're all right. Go right on in there and pitch!"

Homer propped his shotgun carefully beside the back door and tiptoed through to the other room just as the fiddle and guitar swept into the dance tune.

The furious swirls of "Hell Among the Yearlings" came flooding out into the kitchen. The house quivered as the dance began. Someone began clapping loudly in four-four time. The thunder of footfalls filled the house. Herman Gutterman was bellowing:

First couple out to the couple on the right,
Lady around the lady with the gent behind,
Lady around the gent and the gent cut a shine.
Couple up four in the center of the floor—
Two little ladies dolce do,
One more heel and one more toe,
One more swing and on you go . . .

Red Currie, dressed in his sizzle pants, came out into the kitchen and glanced anxiously about.

"Where'd Irene go?" he asked.

Spike turned his bitter, pocked face up at Red. "Where'd you get them pimp's pants, bright boy?" he asked.

"I seen Irene come out here to the kitchen with you awhile ago," Red said. "Where is she now?"

"Oh, you mean you want to know where your girl went! Why, bright boy, I thought you knew all the answers already! So your girl has stood you up, has she, bright boy? Well, what're you whinnyin' around me for? A bright boy like you ought to be able to see that I haven't got your girl."

Red gnawed his lips. He had his fists doubled up. He hesitated a moment. Then he turned and strode out of the house. Spike picked up the whiskey jar and took another drink. A slight spasm twitched his shoulders. He sat there dozing a little.

All the way to Arkansaw
To eat cornpone and 'possum jaw—
At 'em on the left with the old left hand,
Right and left with the right and left grand.

Spike jerked his head up and saw Red Currie standing in the back door. Red was holding out a grimy wisp of cloth with three artificial rosebuds on it.

"I found these in the front seat of your car," he said quietly. "I know who they belong to, all right." Then he skinned his lips back over his teeth and screamed, "Now, God damn you, Spike Callahan, you better tell me where my girl is!"

In the room beyond Herman Gutterman was shouting above the wild music and scuffling feet:

Neck yoke down and double trees draggin',
Once and a half and keep on raggin';
Gals swing hard, but gents swing harder,
Swing that gal by her old rag garter.

Spike peered at the clew with bleary-eyed wonder. All of a sudden he began laughing. He banged the table with his hand and whooped. Red stood stark in his accusing pose and glared at Spike a moment longer. Then he put his arm down and shifted his eyes nervously.

Once and a half and the other half too,
Once and a half go all the way through;

Come to your podner and meet her in the shade,
Come to your podner and all promenade.

Spike held his sides and gasped, "Bright boy, if you keep on, dern if you ain't goin' to be a reg'lar Hawkshaw."

Red Currie reached over beside the door and picked up the shotgun. He pointed it at Spike and said calmly, "I guess this'll make you tell me where you taken Irene!"

Spike's face suddenly grew sober. "You put that gun down, you damn smart aleck, you," he snarled, lurching to his feet.

"Not till you tell me where Irene is!"

"I'll slap some of that smartness out of you, you little red-headed simp!" He came staggering across the room with his open hand outstretched. Red's face puckered up and he began to weep.

"Don't you lay hand on me, Spike!" he sobbed, cringing against the wall. "If you lay hand on me, Spike, I'll shoot you, you see if I don't!" Then with tears streaming over his peeled face, he cried, "You take one more step towards me, Callahan, and I'll blow your guts out!"

He had the shotgun to his shoulder now. Spike halted a few feet from the end of the barrels. "Put that gun down before I grab it and whap it over your head," he said, talking with his teeth clinched.

"You tell me first where Irene is."

"O.K., then. I guess I'll have to take it away from you."

"Stop, Spike, stop!" the boy cried as he pulled the trigger.

After the gun went off there was a deep silence. The music stopped in a long whimper and then no sound at all came from the other room. Spike Callahan stood at the cook stove, against which he had been blown, with a bewildered look on his face. He grunted once and his body folded neatly to the kitchen floor. Red Currie carefully set the gun back where he had got it. He slipped out the back door.

The carved wooden clock over by the kitchen cabinet whirred and the cuckoo popped out at its little door. Its jerky calls fell on the silence ten times.

A woman screamed in the other room. The dancers came swarming out into the blood-spattered kitchen.

LET OUR PERSONAL SERVICE

solve your buying problems. A bit of friendly advice is always helpful on an important purchase. Our Personal Service is free and does not obligate you in any way. It is strictly personal . . . .

The bulky catalogue was sodden with her tears and sweat. She kept her face pressed against its musty pages and went on praying.

"Oh, God," she prayed, "it just can't be right. Blind and crippled and still-born, God. Why must I keep on bringing children like that into the world, God? Oh, God, won't you please let me not ever have another child by him? Please, God, help me . . . help me . . ."

The alarm clock in the kitchen began ringing. She got up quickly and hurried into the kitchen to shut it off. As she turned on the light and walked across to the kitchen shelf she saw that it was just ten o'clock.

This is the story behind this Catalogue . . . the expenditure of time and effort and millions of dollars. These labors have only one aim . . . to illustrate and describe our merchandise with absolute accuracy and truth, and by carrying this conviction to you, to win the privilege of serving you . . . To serve and satisfy you . . .

A MORNING'S FAVOR

Caroline Gordon

Ote Mortimer leaned against a tree, smoking, and watched his brother-in-law, Ed Powers, hitch his horse to one of the stunted saplings that fringed the bare ground around the meeting house. He turned back to the buggy. May was clambering down off the high seat, one child in her arms, another clinging to her skirts. The four of them were making their way up the path.

The boys gathered on the hard-beaten ground in front of the church moved to one side, scuffling and laughing. The little, worm-eaten Sessons boy guffawed and smothered an oath. Bob Davenport cuffed him over the head carelessly.

"If you ain't an ornery little cuss. Cain't you see the preacher comin?"

They surged across the path and came to rest, sprawling against the side of the church, ten or twelve young men and a sprinkling of half-grown boys. The girls and the older people had already taken their seats inside. Bob Davenport moved nearer Ote. "How's it feel to have a preacher in the family?" he inquired.

Ote spat onto the ground, not taking his eyes from the moving figures. "D'know," he said. "He ain't never preached yet."

They had passed the big hackberry and were within a few feet of the church now. May and the children were lagging behind, but Ed walked with measured steps, his head held high, his features solemnly composed. The boys had begun shuffling again at his approach. The older boys and those in the foreground bent their heads and gave him the respectful salutation they

would have given any other preacher, but a few faint catcalls came from the rear, and one of the smaller boys called out Ed's nickname: "Baldy Powers. Hey, Old Baldy Powers!"

Ed stopped short. His blue eyes roved over the group with their odd, intent gaze. He raised his right hand, palm held stiffly upright. "Come in, boys," he said. "Come in. There's somethin inside fer ye."

He had passed on, into the church, an awkward and yet commanding figure, in his rusty black Sunday clothes, May and the children following on his heels. The group of boys hung back until they were well on their way down the aisle; then they all slouched into the church and fell heavily into the back seats. Ote had taken his place with the rest when he saw that his mother had turned around and was beckoning to him. He got up, walked down the aisle, and took his place beside her and May, midway of the church.

Nora Mortimer had lifted the baby onto her lap and was settling the little boy, Beulah, beside her. She leaned over now to whisper to Ote. "Looks all right, don't he?"

Ote's indifferent gaze rested on Ed. They had been going on all week about whether Ed's Sunday suit was good enough for him to preach in. His mother had been on the point twice of going up to the house and asking if Mister Ben didn't have a black suit Ed could have. Ed had restrained her. "Hit don't make no difference what I wear. Hit's the message. Hit come to me in overalls. I reckon hit ain't going to leave me 'cause I ain't got a new suit."

He was walking up the aisle now, past the knot of giggling Davenport children, past old Mr. Billy Rodney's out-thrust, goateed chin. Brother Wickersham, who was to introduce him, had risen from his seat on the platform and was coming forward to meet him. The two men stood in full view of the audience holding each other's hands in a close, lingering grip, peering into each other's eyes. Ed's gaze was serious as always, compelling, but there was a sudden bright flicker of malice in the deep-set eyes of the older man. Ote remembered that Brother Wickersham had experienced sanctification years ago, here in this same church.

"He's jealous of Ed," he thought, "jealous as hell."

He shifted his cud of tobacco in his cheek and settled himself more comfortably on the hard seat. His glance went swiftly over the church, came to rest on the back of a girl's neck a little to the right, three seats ahead. Idelle and her two girl friends had passed the group of boys lounging in front of the church without a look to left or right, a moment ago. She had not even looked up when he and the rest of the boys entered the church, but she knew that he was there. She was turning this way now, leaning over to whisper something to Corrie Wall. The brim of her blue straw hat came down so far that he could not see her eyes, only the curve or her cheek and her chin. She knew he was there, but she had not located him yet. She was turning still farther around now, giving a quick, searching glance to all the back seats. Her eyes had found his. She was looking straight at him. Her face, framed in the blue hat, was tilted back over her shoulder, her lips were wreathed in the conventional smile of the churchgoer, but her eyes had plunged straight into his. He sat stiffly erect, his locked hands swinging between his spread legs. He was aware that his mother and May on either side of him were looking first at the girl and then with quick side glances at him. A little sweat broke out on his forehead. His teeth, clenching suddenly, bit his plug of tobacco in two, but he held the girl's eyes with his until, her lips still fixed in the faint half-smile, she looked away.

Ed had come forward to the edge of the platform and was giving out the lines of a hymn:

> Maree had an onlee son,
> The Jews and the Romans had him hung . . .

The women had started it off, a thin, quavering strain. His mother's voice soared high above the other sopranos. Her big body, quivering, shook the wooden bench. He turned sidewise to steal a glance at her. Her mouth was opened wide as if to loose all the music that was in her. Her eyes, wide open too, seemed to be fixed on some point beyond the whitewashed wall. She was nudging him now, wanting him to sing too. He opened his mouth, dutifully joined in the second verse:

> They took him off to Calvaree
> And thar they nailed him to a tree . . .

He fell abruptly silent as the wailing swelled into the chorus:

Keep your hand on the plow,
Hold on . . . hold on . . . hold on . . .
Keep your hand on the plow . . .
Hold on . . .

Idelle had turned around and was facing the preacher. But one arm lay along the back of the bench. A thin, bare arm, only faintly tanned as yet, delicately splotched with freckles. His eyes followed its curve, from the sharp elbow to the bone that sprang out on the wrist. Idelle's wrists were so slender that they looked as if they would break under any weight, yet he knew that she carried heavy buckets of water every day from the cistern at the big house and chopped in the rows, too, all day long sometimes. A little thin girl like that ought not to work in the field. But Old Man Sheeler was always behind with his crop. The women folks had to help out . . .

She had shifted the position of her arm slightly along the back of the bench. The cheek that was turned towards him was stained suddenly with color. He watched the flush rise slowly until even the nape of her neck was red. She would not turn around, but she knew he was looking at her. She felt his eyes on her arm as if they had been his hand! It was almost as if he had reached out and touched her and she had drawn a little away . . . as she had always done . . . until last night.

A flush swept over his own face. He folded his arms tight across his chest, straightened up in his seat, and stared hard at the preacher. Ed had come to the edge of the platform and was speaking in a hoarse, earnest voice:

"I'm glad to see you here today. I've got a message fer ye. Old folks, little chillun, men and women in their prime. Thar ain't one of ye here today that I ain't been wantin to see . . ."

He stopped speaking abruptly, paced the length of the platform, then whirled about suddenly to face his audience:

"I was down in Mister Ransom's new ground when I got the message. Sat'day morning it was. Nigh on to twelve o'clock. I was mighty nigh ready to take out. I was a-standin thar by one of them old stumps . . ." He stepped down off the platform, advanced until he was within a foot of the faces in the first row. "I was a-standin thar by one of them old stumps,"

he repeated, "not thinkin about nothin no more'n whether to take out now or plow another furrow before dinner." His eyes went to the face of a man on the extreme right of the third row. "Monroe Travers," he said sharply, "you know that old mule I bought off Mister Robinson last spring?"

The man spat out of the open window beside him. "I advised ye not to git him. Past his prime and warn't no 'count to start with."

Ed nodded impatiently. "That thar old mule, Frank, was a-standin thar at the aidge of the field sound asleep when suddenly he picks up them years of his like he heard somebody call him. I didn't think nothin of it, but a minute later that mule he starts off across the field hard as he can tear . . ." His voice sank to a whisper. "He didn't travel across it like no mule. He went across it like a horse. He went *aginst* the furrows and he went fast as any horse could travel . . ."

A sigh ran through the audience, thin and sibilant like the murmur of the wind through ripe wheat. Ed put his hand up and dashed beads of sweat from his forehead. "I don't know how long it was," he muttered. "When I come to myself, me and that mule was down in the hollow by the spring. I don't know how we got over the fence or how we got down the side of that hill, but thar we was by that spring . . ."

The sighing ran through the crowd again, deeper this time and more sustained. As it grew stronger, old Mrs. Agrew heaved her enormous bulk halfway up in her seat, fell back as if overcome by her own weight, then heaved herself up again. Broken, indeterminate sounds came from her lips.

Ote looked out of the open window, into a mass of dogwood blossoms. He noted mechanically that the woods were pressing closely on this side of the church, a whole thicket of dogwood and sassafras springing up right at the window. But the stiff, paper-white blooms, the black branches were like something remembered, not seen. He saw more plainly the hollow where Ballard's spring bubbled up between two leaning black rocks. They had come along there last night right after supper. A clear pale light still lingered in the open field over which they had come, but dark was already gathering in the hollow. They had stepped down the path slowly, clumsily in the gathering dark, their arms wrapped about each other. Idelle had made him take her up the ravine on the far side of the hollow. When he

wanted to stop at the spring she had said it was too light. People coming along the path might see them. They had gone finally to the top of the hill where a big hemlock tree swept its branches low on the ground . . .

Ed had stepped down off the platform and was standing at the head of the aisle. His voice, rising and falling, filled the room:

"It warn't like no feelin I ever had before. It were a kind feelin, a gentle feelin, and yet it were joyful too. I jumped right up thar in the hollow. 'Sing,' I said. 'Sing. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!' " He stopped and looked about him as if bewildered. "Warn't nobody there but me and that mule and an ole crow. But I want you all to hear me now. I want you all to know what happened to me thar in that hollow by Ballard's spring."

He raised his hand and gestured sharply to the right. The eyes of the listeners followed his pointing finger to the field that was framed in the open window. A level field, bright with new green, hedged at the far end with dogwood blossom and the yellow tassels of new sassafras. "That ar field of Mister Ben's," he said, "hit's a pretty sight. Thar's some of you'll say thar ain't no prettier sight than a field like that covered with new rye. Thar's some of you workin from sunup till sundown to git a field like that of your own. Some is saying Ed Powers'd do better to save his breath to try to git ahead hisself . . . " He shook his head while his eyes held theirs. "Hit ain't nothin," he said. "This world and all its pleasures . . . Hit ain't nothin." He ran his hand through his shock of auburn hair. His voice broke hoarsely, sank to a murmur:

"You old folks ain't the only sinners. Thar's some of you here before me still young enough to be studyin meanness. I know ye and I know the kind of meanness you're studyin. I'm a-gittin along but I ain't forgot how it was." He paused, leveled a finger dramatically at the listening faces. "Thar's a woman settin right here before me. She might not tell ye if ye asked her, but she ain't forgot the night me and her was settin down thar on the creek bank. Settin thar clost to each other and both of us studyin the same thing. She turnin to me and me turnin to her. I ain't sayin we done any meanness that night. Hit don't make no difference. Hit was in our minds to sin. We mought not a called it that, but that's what it was . . . " He paused again, raised himself on his toes and flung his hands wide:

"Oh, brethren and sistren, sin can taste mighty sweet. Hit can be so sweet on the lips you'll say to yourself hit cain't be sin, but sin it is . . . Sweet while you're tastin of it but after you've savored of it, it'll turn to ashes . . . dust and ashes . . ."

The little rustling sounds made by people turning around had died away. Ote sat looking straight in front of him. He did not need to turn around and scan the faces. He knew the woman that was down on the creek bank with Ed that night. Rob Traylor's wife. She sat there now beside her husband, her worn, sallow face upturned to the preacher.

Ote stared at the woman while Ed's words echoed in his mind: "Settin thar clost to each other . . . She turnin to me and me turnin to her . . ."

He could see the creek, a silver line on the black, and the dark forms of the man and woman on the bank, but in his mind they remained immobile. He could not picture them turning towards each other. But the hemlock tree was a black cloud on the side of the hill, its branches feathery to the touch, wet already with dew. He and Idelle had had to crawl to get in under them. They had sat there close together, their legs touching in the little space made by two great, down-sweeping boughs. The hollow that had seemed so black a few minutes before took light from the open fields. He could see the white trunk of the sycamore that grew beside the spring and make out the outline of the two rocks that leaned over the water. Her face beside him had been just a splotch in the dark, but he had had the warm pressure of her knee against his thigh. He had sat there rigid, silent, while the fire rose and spread over his body. It was she who moved first. She had reached over and laid her hand on his knee. He had found himself pleading with her, stammering: "Idelle, I can't wait. Idelle . . . I can't wait . . ."

He had not needed to plead. She had come straight into his arms. She was trembling all over but her mouth had sought his eagerly. The hemlock branches had been all about them like dark plumes . . .

Ed's hands, that had been raised high over his head, were sinking. He held them tight, clenched against his breast. "Hit's like them days in spring. Hit'll be cloudy when you git up and you know it's goin to rain before night. Thar'll be flashes of sun off and on enduren the day, but they don't mean nothin. You know it's goin to rain and rain all night . . ." His clenched hands sprang apart, extended themselves pleadingly. "Sinner . . . Sinner . . . Hit'll be a long night."

Ote shifted himself in his seat, fixed his eyes on the toes of his boots. Idelle had been afraid to go home last night. "I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid they can all look at me and tell what I've done . . ." She had cried a little and had talked about her sister, Texie, the one the old man had driven away from home. But she had been happy again by the time they got out of the hollow. He had helped her up onto the stile. She was standing on the top step when she turned to him again. They had slipped down together into the wet grass. A lightning bug flitting over the meadow had seemed a lantern swinging in a moving hand. Idelle had laughed recklessly. "Let 'em look. I know what to tell 'em."

He had known swift jealousy. "I reckon you do. I reckon you been at it long enough to know all kind of tales to tell 'em."

She did not draw away and did not speak but she trembled and her body grew rigid in his arms. He drew her closer, asked forgiveness by the pressure of his arms. She had put her head down against his breast . . .

Ed had stopped gesturing and stood now, his hands hanging limp at his sides. His head was thrown back. His blue eyes shone. He spoke earnestly, his lips seeming to linger over the words. "Hit ain't nothin. This world and all its pleasures. A flash of sun on a rainy day . . . A mornin's favor. That's all . . ."

His voice died away. Silence flowed into the church, settled over the bending bodies, the upturned faces. An old man on one of the front seats sighed deeply. Somewhere in the back of the church a child wailed. On the murmur of its mother's hushings a woman's voice rose, full and rich:

Oh, ye young, ye gay, ye proud,
Ye must die and wear the shroud . . .

Mrs. Traylor rose to her feet and lurched stiffly out into the aisle. Her husband, slumped down in his seat, did not move. The little boy who had been sitting beside her slipped from his place, stood a moment staring solemnly about him, then followed her uncertainly down the aisle.

Ed came to meet them. He took the woman's hand in his, laid his other hand on her shoulder. Around them the chorus swelled:

Time will rob you of your bloom,
Death will take you to the tomb . . .

Ed had led her to the mourner's bench and was coming back to greet the other sinners who came crowding now from all corners of the house. The music was drowned in the shrill cries of children and the excited whispers of onlookers. Ote became aware suddenly that in the seat in front of him old Mrs. Agrew's voice had been going on all the time:

"Oh, Lord . . . Lord . . . Jesus . . . Sweet Jesus . . . " She was on her feet and had whirled about to face the congregation. "He said, 'Come,' she shouted, 'Come out from amongst 'em or you're lost.' He spoke to me by night and I'm buildin. I'm buildin high. I love Jesus . . . "

She slumped sidewise suddenly and fell between the seats. There was a light froth on her lips and her eyes were closed, but her lips did not cease their mumblings. Her hands upraised, the fingers stiff and bent like talons, seemed to clutch something out of the air. The woman sitting next to Ote groaned suddenly.

"She's laid holt," she shrieked. "She's laid holt and she's a-bringin it down. Oh, God, I'm a sinner and I always been a sinner!"

Nora leaned forward, her right hand cupped behind her ear. Her face was bent upon Mrs. Agrew for a moment; then she turned back to May. "Hit's tongues," she said, "the unknown tongue. She's speakin."

Ed raised his hands and smote them sharply together. His voice, high and thin, pierced the babel of voices around him. "I heard ye, God," he cried. "I heard ye in the wilderness. Come down . . . Sweet Jesus . . . "

Nora was getting heavily to her feet. They were all singing:

Then you'll cry, I want to be
Happy through eternitee . . .

Ote stood up beside his mother. Ed had stopped in his progress down the aisle and stood now not three feet away from them. He rocked a little on his heels. His lifted hands, swaying now to the left, now to the right, wove patterns in the smoky air. His lips, moving, half formed words: "A long night . . . Sinner . . . Sinner. Hit'll be a long night . . . "

Ote looked away. Idelle was standing up between the two Cottar girls. She was singing. He could see her shoulder blades move under the thin blue dress. She had turned her head. Their eyes met while her lips still moved in the song. *Tonight,* she had said. The same place. But he must not come to the house. She would come across the pasture to meet him. The fiery-sweet

sensation swept over him again, almost to the point of bliss. He raised his head, stared straight ahead of him. The church was not there nor the people, nor Ed's rapt face, only the hemlock branches that sweeping low to the ground were parted by the impatient hand.

TWO LIVES

Gale Wilhelm

She was there on the bed all day and he walked round the room and looked at her and then just before it was dark enough to turn on the lights he telephoned. His mind was calm and cool and flat like the marble slab at a teller's window. The queer part was that he had known from the first he would do it some day. The first time they were together for a whole day he quarreled with her. She wouldn't let him take her all the way home and he went mad, he could have killed her. They were in a restaurant the next time and he broke some glasses and cut her arm and when he saw the blood he went mad again and he wanted to go out and smash the whole place. He tried it and one of the waiters hit him behind the ear. The sweetest single moment in his life was when he woke in the dark in his own room. He had a bandage on his head and there was a clean antiseptic smell in the room and Miriam with her arm around him was sweeter and closer to him than she had ever been. It was dark and still and they said things to each other they'd never have said if it hadn't happened.

But he knew all the time he'd do it. At first he tried fighting against it. He tried shutting his teeth and keeping his fists in his pockets, he tried turning his back on her and looking out the window and sometimes it worked. His anger went down, his face cooled, his hands got steady and he was ashamed. But whenever she said Herman, Herman's going to Los Angeles on a case darling isn't that marvelous? or Oh if Herman saw us coming out together, or Herman came back today, whenever she said that

name he had to smash something and because she loved him she endured it and afterward when he was quiet and ashamed she talked to him and was very gentle. The name had no more significance to her than any of a thousand names she might say. There was only one name and it was his. You know it don't you darling? or I shouldn't be here. And then he was tender and sorry for days and they were very happy. But sooner or later it happened, she said the name again and hearing her say the name it was always the same with him, a red horizon everywhere he looked and he hated her, he hated the name and the mouth saying the name.

In the first year he was sensible and they talked about the possibility of her getting a Mexican divorce but in the second year they talked about the impossibility of her getting a divorce anywhere and it was then he began to hate the sound of the name. But Miriam there's no law to compel a woman to live with a man, you can leave him can't you?

You don't know Herman, she said.

He jumped up. He wasn't angry but the sound of the chair crashing made him angry and when she said, You're being very foolish darling, don't allow yourself, he felt the blood spurting behind his eyes and his temples drumming and he hit her.

Even when he was little and he and Carl got into a row at table and he got sent away instead of Carl to eat in the kitchen, even then anger was something pouring through him like hot metal, something blinding-hot and terrible. He had known from the first it would happen someday but not so soon. She said, Oh darling why can't you resign yourself to what's impossible and be happy? If I went away with you he'd find me he'd bring me back. If you knew Herman.

Herman Herman, Herman he said. Listen, if you didn't love him you couldn't say his name the way you do.

She shook her head and said, Why won't you understand?

Understand? he said going toward her. I understand enough to know this's as far as it's going. I've never had a moment's peace since I met you. You know that don't you?

When she saw the knife she looked curious at first and then she propped herself up on the bed and pushed back her hair and smiled. It was a beautiful knife but she told him once it was too villainous looking for a

letter-opener and he laughed and said yes but someday they could commit beautiful harakiri with it. Put it away darling, she said.

You're not going back to him today, he said, you're never going back.

She was smiling and his temples were drumheads with bare fists pounding on them and she said, Darling put it away, and he bent and swung his arm and the knife went in under her shoulder blade like a knife in butter, the blade clear of bone and she threw herself backward and showed her teeth and he covered them with his hand and then there were tears in her eyes and she was struggling and he said, Now it's almost over. She struggled and her eyes were like wild black horses in their sockets and then she didn't struggle. She quit struggling and turning and he heard the room come back walking close around the bed. He turned her over on her face turning her gently as he did sometimes when she was sleeping. He smoothed her hair and covered her and the hilt of the knife with the covers and then he put his face down against her hair and said, Now it's almost over, and the words marched round the bed in single file and his head felt fine and cool and new. He saw blood coming through the bedclothes and he got off the bed and there was blood on his forearm and blood on his wrist and he looked at it and said, Now it's almost over. He looked at her and she was long and still on the bed. He sighed and said, Now it's almost over almost over.

Once during the day looking at her he thought of his mother lying on another bed not dead but dying. Jimmy dear you have the whole world before you, make a place in it and be happy Jimmy.

But Miriam on the bed was his world ended. He sat down at his desk and looked at her. Where was Miriam? Was Miriam lying in that long shell of a woman? Was Miriam free?

He went slowly to the bathroom and the little dark room tipped and ribbons of fire burned across his eyes. He wondered why he was tired now. He picked up the cake of soap Miriam kept on the margin of the washbowl and it was delicately scented, it was spring compressed and he clenched his hand on it remembering spring in a Marin valley with Miriam. His nails sank into the soap and he put it down and washed his hands and arms and when he looked into the mirror he saw a man with shadows for eyes and a face grooved out and at the edge of his hair there was a dark red

smear of blood. He wondered how it had got there and he left it and went back into the bedroom wearing the dark red badge on his forehead. He looked at Miriam and walked back and forth wearing the red badge. It was the end and not quite the end, he had to get the knife out and he didn't want to turn the covers back and he was afraid the knife wouldn't come out. He went slowly to the bed and turned back the covers. The sheet was glued to her back. The knife came out and he covered her again. He put the knife in his left hand and touched her hair and it was alive under his hand. He hated her but he bent down and kissed her hair and then he loved her more than he ever had and he said, Miriam you were worth all of it. It wasn't his voice, something had gone out of it, it wasn't his voice when he telephoned the police and gave his name and address carefully and told them he had killed a woman. Yes, he said, Mrs. Herman Kauffelmeir. Yes. Herman Kauffelmeir.

It was the last time he heard the name he hated. He went from the telephone to the hall door and unlocked it and then he lay down beside Miriam without looking at her. The room was still and he felt nothing, only the great soft settling flakes of sadness chilling and darkening the room. And then his eyes were scalded with sudden tears and he felt the weight of two lives lying on his heart.

MEMENTO

John Connolly

BROTHER FARRELL'S company were not alarmed at his absence, Brother Malloy least of all. The three of them walked along *Via della Strata* just as usual, admiring the jagged whiteness of the plum blossoms in the valley, and hunching their shoulders to the high sun. They knew of Brother Farrell's peculiarities: how he once appeared at Mass, for instance, without his cincture, how he would stray off at the wrong times to his cubicle and would read his handbook of Scholastic theology or *The Imitation of Christ,* and how, too, he often sat all afternoon at his desk, unless someone rapped on the partition and reminded him of his outside work. Therefore they felt certain that Brother Farrell was reading his handbook; they imagined him all alone before his few books, his cassock wrinkled as ever, and the pupils of his eyes distended in their effort to part the shadows of St. Aloysius', an attic above the chapel, where he, along with Brother Malloy and two other brothers, had his cubicle. The company soon forgot Brother Farrell. With an exchange of *Deo gratias,* they passed one company after another, walked all the way to the shrine, and then back towards the Novitiate again. The sun was leaning to the west.

Brother Beadle slowly clapped his hands, and the companies under the oak got up from the benches and straightened their cassocks. The novices started for the entrance of the cloister, a group of companies in the lead, smaller groups spread out behind. Brother Malloy, far in the rear, quickened his pace. He noticed the cracking soil of the road and the tall

grass alongside, and—looking over, meanwhile, at the great patches of bloom below him—realized with sadness how insatiable are the demands of spring on the earth.

But he let go the thought before he had found terms which might have expressed the vague disturbances shared by all the novices since the day one brother left, followed soon by another, and then another, until some twenty in all had gone. The departures had started long ago, in a period of doubt and despair. The last brother had left late in October, and by the end of winter the novices had begun to feel an outward immunity; nevertheless, they were still on guard, having kept the sense of an old foe close at hand, who might, before they took their vows in early fall, strike at them several times. They always became uneasy at the whistle of the morning train.

The novices prayed near the entrance of the cloister, uncertain whether their number was fewer by one since the night before. They broke companies and walked in silence through the cloister, through the corridor of the Novitiate, and up the stairs to their cubicles. There they read *The Imitation of Christ,* and then prepared for work, first making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

At supper only Brother Malloy, who watched the spilling wax harden into long spurs on the side of the candle before him, was mindful of Brother Farrell; the others, indeed, had no reason to miss him, for the system of unassigned seats covered over an absence as boughs a pit. The refectory was a deep, wide room with a high ceiling of yellow plaster. Brother Malloy's gaze turned to the other candles on the long table; he would have liked to see them all, especially the many lighted rows behind him, before one of which Brother Farrell might be sitting, forgetful of his food. Brother Malloy liked the custom of lighting the refectory with candles during Lent since he fancied that they somehow compressed the meaning of the season into a tough, narrow flame. The trembling well at the candle tip formed a focus for his thoughts. He had felt that Brother Farrell was absent during the afternoon meditation, but he had not been sure, and had found himself, moreover, too much occupied with his own meditation to listen for sounds in the adjoining cubicle. He had obeyed the bell promptly, and without even pausing at Brother Farrell's curtain, had hur-

ried down from the attic to join the line in front of the refectory, and in a few minutes had taken a seat far up in front.

His large head bent over the table, he twisted a lock of his black hair in a hooked finger and drank several glasses of water, until, overcome with uneasiness, he took off the last four pieces of bread from the aluminum tray, half shielding the act with his long elbows and hooded shoulders, and held the bottom up, mirror-like, just above his head and beyond the candle; but the surface was scratched and misty, and all he saw were flaming caricatures waxing and waning at the turn of his wrist. In the morning he would ask Father Master for a *culpa,* and Father Master would study him and say, "Yes, brother, I'll give you a *culpa.* Three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys, to be said at noon. A breach of etiquette is nothing in itself, but as you know, one cannot be too circumspect about his behavior. Only religious scruples are unhealthy. You will remember that, won't you, brother?"

He could scarcely put down his alarm when Brother Farrell failed to appear at the evening recreation. He remained silent as the other two brothers remarked several times on this second absence, looking at him repeatedly but withholding their questions. The company recreated as at noon, except that they talked in Latin and walked near the oak. The patches of bloom were blurred and edged with grey.

For a long time Brother Malloy eluded the efforts of the brothers to make him talk, but yielding to their insistence, the source of which he understood, he assumed his share of the conversation. How they led up to the topic of marvellous dogs, he was never sure. At a certain point he found himself called upon to give an account of a famous dog appearing in the work of an early Christian writer. When he had finished, the brothers asked him to tell the story which Father Master had told him one evening in colloquy, and which he had retold to a small group on a rainy day at Villa. Tonight his sudden sympathy for the brothers overrode his feelings, and he complied.

In another province some years back, a Master of Novices, reading late in his study, had heard a scuffling noise coming from the corridor off which the novices slept. Amazed that the novices were breaking the rules, he went upstairs to investigate, but found everyone sleeping and the corridor empty.

The following night the same noise broke out, and as before he found nothing.

Here, according to Brother Malloy, Father Master stopped and stressed the point that this Master of Novices had never been known to have hallucinations of any sort, and that all his life he had been highly regarded in the Order, holding the office of provincial shortly before his death.

On the third night the Master of Novices went upstairs expecting again to find nothing; but this time a great black dog jumped at his throat. He was naturally disinclined to seek out the infirmarian for treatment of the wound. He made a bandage out of a handerchief, and though he stood for many minutes before the mirror, the bandage showed only a small spot of blood. In the morning the wound was healed. After that there were no more scufflings in the corridor, for instead, the dog took to appearing in the Novice Master's locked study, just a few minutes of, or a few minutes after, eleven, resting on its haunches a moment in the corner before it sprang at his throat and vanished, leaving the smell of its stinking breath behind. The Novice Master became thin, and the infirmarian made him try several kinds of tonics and finally advised him to consult a doctor. He wanted above all to keep his good health, realizing that in a neurotic state he could not judge between reality and delusion. He became thinner. Happily, at the end of six months, the dog did not appear one night, nor did it molest the Master of Novices further. In the following year he told the story to his superiors with great reserve, and then never spoke of it again.

They moved out of the shadows, walking swiftly in the middle of the road, intolerant and impatient of the turns, each one of which would fain cheat them into hope before it receded and showed not the arc-lamp ahead of them, but yet another turn—these, and the dark pockets beneath the overhanging shrubbery, so enmeshed and deluded them with a nimble, backward flight that Brother Malloy began to fancy that each new turn and each new pocket was the one he had just passed. The arc-lamp was dazzling; he turned his head and found the darkness covered with a mica-like surface that baffled his eyes. He could give no reason, but felt an inward loss of power, and waited for Points just as at bedtime he usually waited for the snapping off of the lights.

He held back in the line so that he might get a seat in the last pew. He knew most of the brothers by the shape of their heads; Brother Farrell's bulged at the sides and was flat on top. He surveyed the heads quickly. Father Master was beginning the prelude to the meditation on Quadrigesima Sunday, proceeding sturdily from sentence to sentence. Too late! Brother Farrell had not filed in with the rest, had not come in late even, for suddenly lateness had come to an end. Yet Brother Malloy was unwilling to credit what he saw, his mind weaving a hospital scene, a hygienic cot, on which Brother Farrell was lying, as he must have lain in the attic, white face, muddy-colored eyes, brittle hair and all. "The desert lies between Jerusalem and Jericho," Father Master was saying. "There brigands used to lurk at a place called Damin, that is, blood, from the shedding of the blood of many victims. When a man descended from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among brigands, he wore the figure of Adam, who was overcome by Satan. It is fitting therefore that Christ should overcome Satan in the very place where Satan overcame the figures of Adam." *It is fitting therefore* . . . entered the tablet of the brother beside him. "However, Christ goes not alone out into the desert to be tempted, but all the Sons of God with Him. That Christ, the second Adam, overcame Satan, should be a source of great consolation to us. We can all take heart." The brother labored over this last sentence. That was all. Father Master had knelt to pray, and he must also kneel. The sickroom had become confused with the gleaming ridges on Father Master's bald head. Brother Malloy had not the courage to test his own fictions.

He took the long way about to the attic, up the stairs of the new building, and back along the corridor of the old. He paused as he stepped over the threshold, tripped somehow in his cassock and fell hard on his kneecap. This accident gave him justification for remaining in the corridor until the beadle announced the order of the morrow, instead of going first to his cubicle, as was his custom, and then returning for Order. Surely Brother Beadle had left out something between the beginning and the *cetera de more*. All the rest as usual! Brother Malloy delayed; the novices were returning to their cubicles and getting ready for bed; both his roommates passed him, and still he leaned against the doorjamb. He must move, he realized that; in a few minutes the bell would ring announcing the

magnum silentium. He compromised by going to the lavatory. Now there was no help for it, and he hurried back up the corridor and through the doorway and mounted the stairs to St. Aloysius'.

Lights shone through the hangings in the first two cubicles; but Brother Malloy knew that no matter how long he waited, none would shine in the third. He passed the cubicle in a stride, pulled back the hanging of his own, and fumblingly turned on the desk light. He untied his cincture and jerked off his cassock. He heard the creaking of bedsprings, and still he was undressing furiously in the only light in all that darkness. One brother sighed. Steps across the room and a knock at his partition.

"Frater?"

"Utique."

"Ubi est Frater Farrell?"

At the sound of the final bell Brother Malloy snapped off his light. He tried to compose himself for sleep and began by recalling the points for the morning meditation. He could not forget, however, that he was lying next to an empty cubicle. He turned in his bed, and a moment later the brother who had knocked on the partition, likewise turned. He would have liked to think that this was a sign, a signal, but he could not, for he was ignorant as yet of what the brother surmised, though he felt that the brother must know. You need no almanac to tell that the moon will not rise tonight, and you may be sure that the red flashes behind your closed eyelids are brighter than anything your eyes can see. Nevertheless he rose on his elbow and looked around, turning his head so as to take in the cubicle completely.

He gradually made out certain objects: his desk, beside it the *prie-Dieu*, and over in the corner the washstand with the white bowl and the pitcher sitting inside. Hours passed. The covers were slipping from his bed, but in the cubicle next to his they were neat and square. Now, if he would stand in his bed and look over the partition, he could see for himself the smooth counterpane.

Sitting up, he swung his cassock over his pajamas, drew on his slippers and waited. He had never known the brothers to roll so much in their sleep. He paused at Brother Farrell's cubicle, the floor splintered underfoot, but he finally went on down the passage and over to the window. The frost had powdered the chicken house roof; the blossoms were pulling away from

the shoots, poised to fall on the chill ground: countless blossoms that would fill the ridges in the sunlight and perish in a dry flood. A few yards behind were the sleeping brothers and the thin bed, and over all was the crowing of a rooster, the notes strained but clear and not unlike an alarm.

At this hour the monks used to chant their hymns and pray for dawn, while the demons scattered before the warning of the ancient night watchman. He pronounced part of an old Latin exorcism which a parish priest had taught him, to see, apparently, if he could remember the words: *"Exorcizo te, immunde spiritus, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, ut exeas et recedas ab his famulis Dei."* He stood before the window in a forward attitude, looking out on the frosty world, his hand about his throat and his legs pressed together; but his mind was deliberate and warm as it explored the troubled feeling of maturity which had followed on the anticipation of his priestly powers. Vega was rising over the hill and casting a stern blue light on the grey landscape. There would be blossoms enough to burden the branches with fruit in the summer, there would always be enough, whatever the rain or the frost.

The brothers' sleep was relaxed, the second cockcrow settling peacefully on their heads. He must keep his mind clear. But he found himself praying to the Savior for protection as his thoughts lost their grip; he fell into an unhappy sleep and shouted himself into wakefulness amid a partial day, the covers far up on his legs, the bell ringing, and the brothers shouting, *"Deo gratias."*

The vigil light in the chapel, despite the draft which blew on it from the open stained-glass windows, kept racing back along the wick, the stronger for its flickerings. Brother Malloy turned his eyes on the novices, who were massed in a firm block of pews behind the celebrant, and who were holding their missals high to cover their distraction. They were waiting, as they had waited often, for the whistle of the morning train.

The group became increasingly tense, their eyes on the figured windows. Already in their minds the whistle had taken on properties of Brother Farrell. And what more was he than a beginner, stiff and uncouth, who had blunted under the discipline? He had been born in Oregon twenty years earlier and had attended a local college for a year or two. He had made his application in May of 1929 and had been admitted in the following Sep-

tember. He had missed the proper train out of San Francisco and had had to wait over for several hours, arriving in the town near midnight. He had turned up a blind lane, where a couple in a parked car had told him the way, and had asked him if he was going to be one of those Jesuits, and he had walked up the hill with a suit case under his arm and a last cigarette between his fingers. The white Novitiate surmounted by a gilded cross had been quiet, and the side doors opening into the cloister had been wide open. He had tiptoed down the corridor until a lay brother had come out finally from one of the rooms and had said, "*Deo gratias,*" and he had said, "*Deo gratias, sir.*" The lay brother had called Father Master, who had received Brother Farrell and given him a cubicle in St. Aloysius'. These details had become common knowledge.

The whistle burst through the windows, gasping and wrenched at the end, leaving a great vacuum in the air that seemed to suck the leaning novices from their seats. They became rigid, and some of them looked down the length of the pews, without moving their heads. The train would be taking on baggage and perhaps that strange passenger, uneasy in his brushed suit, who had not always been a citizen of the world. The breath of the novices rose in milky puffs. The engine would be rolling again on wheels sheathed in steam. It was almost seven when the novices finished a prolonged thanksgiving and went down to the refectory.

Brother Malloy found on his return to the attic for his evening meditation that the hanging of Brother Farrell's cubicle was pushed back, the bed stripped, the books gone. No wind, but Brother Farrell, had animated the dust and the lint. They were memory, which crumbles in the hand.

At supper the waiters hurried in and out among the tables near Brother Malloy; no matter how swift and abrupt their movements, they could not shake off their giant shadows, which bent in the corners of the refectory and clung to the ceiling. In many ways the shadows were like Brother Farrell. The relationship was plain enough, but even Brother Malloy did not feel the need to carry it out. The novices did not want Brother Farrell to bear more than was just, and, moreover, they knew the error of identifying a manifestation with a cause. The candles were burning low in the sockets; the tablecloths shone here and there with spots of glazed wax. The shadows closed in above the heads of the novices.

Off to one side on the dark *della Strata,* Brother Malloy rested his mind of the whole problem which the departure of Brother Farrell had revived. The novices stayed together in larger groups than was customary, and said little, moving constantly, but always around the same point. No one mentioned Brother Farrell. They watched headlights clash on the great highway below; they were thoughtful at the foreknowledge with which their vantage point endowed them. The *Memorare* had been said and the novices were returning to the Novitiate. Brother Malloy walked more slowly than the others, for he disliked the attic. He did not want to go in.

For the second time there was a knock on his partition just before the final bell rang.

"Frater Farrell abest?"

"Utique. Scisne, nonne?" Brother Malloy waited.

"Speraveram. . ." The brother had returned to his cubicle.

The novices became more accustomed to the whistle, but they gripped the backs of the pews nevertheless. No longer sure that the departures had come to an end, deceived often, some twenty times in all, they prepared themselves for a new attack. Tomorrow this brother at whose mouth the Eucharist stopped—this brother, devout and contained—might fail to appear at Mass. So day after day they received Communion and waited.

They searched the first news of Brother Farrell for a clue, but they were disappointed. He had gone to Santa Barbara for a rest after staying a week in San Francisco with members of the Society; he was improving; he would take his vows in the summer. No one was deceived. They studied this attempt to prolong doubt, but they attached no blame to Father Master, who may have countenanced the story, from his point of view, in good faith. They began to talk about Brother Farrell, first in small groups at Villa, and then in "walk companies," until he took on proportions of a legend. What news of him came, contradicted itself. He would study for the secular priesthood in the fall. He would enter the University of Washington. He would do neither.

Lent was on the wane. The farmers were discing the orchards, the grass was bursting with silky beards. Thick on the branches were little

green fruit. On Easter Sunday the novices felt that they had come out of the desert and that all of them would take their vows. Brother Malloy used to listen for the train whistle and think that long before the plum trees withered, their minds would fumble for the name of Brother Farrell.

EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

George S. Counts

IN PERIODS of severe crisis modern nations have commonly subjected their educational programs to thoroughgoing examination and revision. The disaster at Jena in 1806 and the humiliating treaty of Tilsit the following year caused Prussia to reconstruct her educational program; the crushing defeat of the French armies at the hand of Germany in 1870-71 moved France to found the Third Republic and inaugurate numerous educational reforms; a series of misfortunes in both the political and the economic spheres during the first half of the nineteenth century furnished the inspiration for the folk high school movement in Denmark; and the oft-demonstrated weakness of the Orient in its relations with the Occident finally influenced both Japan and China to abandon ancient educational institutions and to introduce new programs modeled after the schools of the West. Also we know that any genuine social upheaval is followed by fundamental changes in the organized methods of rearing the young. Consider the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the recent convulsions in Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Italy, and Germany. Indeed, so intimate is the relation between social change and educational reform that the extent and nature of the ensuing changes in the schools provide one of the most reliable measures of the depth and scope of the disturbance.

That the American people, along with many of the other peoples of the world, are well into a period of profound cultural crisis, even the most optimistic, unless he is seeking public office or endeavoring to protect some

special interest, would scarcely have the hardihood to deny. In an opinion already famous, Justice Brandeis has said that the present economic depression is more serious than war. The crisis, however, should not be associated too closely with the months and years that have passed since October, 1929. It may be traced back to the middle of the past century, to the rise of industrial capitalism in the United States, and to the sharpening of those international rivalries that led to the Great War. It is intimately involved in the War itself and in the revolutions that have shaken the world structure since 1917. But it can be understood only in terms of those advances in science and technology that have profoundly altered the foundations of human relationships. And in the United States it presents prosperity and depression as two sides of the same shield. However severe may be the physical hardships from which men suffer today, there is little reason for believing that the period of prosperity was superior in moral quality to the present period of adversity. Is it not likely that later generations will manifest little pride in the achievements of the nineteen-twenties?—years when the American people played the Pharisee among the nations, thanked God that they were not like other peoples, repudiated their moral obligations in the world, engaged in a mad scramble for unearned riches at home, turned a deaf ear to the cries of the weak and exploited classes, suppressed all forms of fundamental political and economic dissent, denied constitutional rights to the under-privileged, became insensitive to injustice and crime, accepted with utter complacency the most blatant forms of corruption and venality, and sought surcease of conscience in the pursuit of one sensation after another. Moreover, the depression itself was germinal in the period of prosperity and lay back of the tinsel and glamor and hollow pretense of the era of Harding and Coolidge. The task today, therefore, is not to return to the nineteen-twenties, because in that direction lies moral disaster, as well as the recurrence of the present material distress, but rather to move forward to a society founded on more liberal, humane, and rational principles.

II

As one reviews the immediate past, looks out upon the present, and contemplates the future, one must conclude that the American people have fallen short of the requirements of the age. This perhaps is another way of

saying that in the largest sense the educational program, taken as a whole and not confined to the schools, has failed. In general it has not produced leaders of a stature commensurate with the need. Throughout the depression men occupying the highest political offices have either totally misread the times or deliberately resorted to deception in their public utterances. It is literally nauseating to recall the promises of the early return of prosperity that have emanated regularly from official sources during this period. Equally disturbing have been the appeals to traditional prejudices which have been made by forces of reaction—such organizations as the American Liberty League and the professional patriotic societies—appeals that could only blind the masses of the people to the economic and social realities.

Some comfort may be found in the argument that, because of adherence to an archaic conception of politics, government office cannot be expected to attract the best minds. According to this view, which has been expressed many times by commentators on American politics, the ablest men go into business. It is to the great merchants, financiers, and industrialists therefore that the American people naturally turn for guidance. During the days of prosperity they were told through every agency of propaganda that authentic giants ruled the economic order, that their destiny was in safe hands, that they were the envy of the less fortunate peoples of the earth. With respect to this pleasant fiction, they were rudely disillusioned; but through the agencies of propaganda a concerted effort is being made to restore the old mentality. It is therefore peculiarly desirable at this time for them to remember that with rare exceptions these one-time giants were found to be no larger than ordinary men and perhaps not one whit superior to the much-abused politicians. The American people, without being aware of the deception practiced upon them, were made to view business leaders through the magnifying glasses of the publicity agent and the yes-man. These men showed themselves able to lead only when leadership was unnecessary. When the way was beset with difficulties, they became frightened and wholly absorbed in saving their own possessions and privileges. They have been called captains of industry; but real captains lead their men and set an example of courage and fortitude. As they witnessed the standard of living descend from level to level, they seemed able only to utter incantations, wring their hands, and talk about the preserva-

tion of the ancient American liberties—liberties which the millions had already lost through the advance of industrial capitalism and the concentration of economic power. They were sadly bewildered men, ready to grasp at any straw that chance permitted to drift within their reach. They knew how to build up great private fortunes in the production or sale of commodities, but they seemed to know little about the management of the economic enterprise in the interests of society as a whole. They no more willed prosperity than they willed the depression—they merely took advantage of good fortune. In 335 B. C., Plato had seen enough of human affairs to observe: "Ruin comes when the trader, whose heart is lifted up by wealth, becomes ruler." And three centuries later a simple carpenter from Nazareth came to about the same conclusion.

The educational system, however, has not only failed to produce leaders; it has also failed to produce followers. And perhaps it has failed to produce leaders because it has failed to produce followers. That the masses of American citizens are capable of choosing leaders competent to deal with the current situation is clearly contrary to the facts. Their mental equipment is too meagre; their range of ideas too limited; their inherited prejudices too deep-seated. They have done little fundamental thinking on social and economic questions since the Civil War. Consequently, while they may in a sense be said to live in the present, their minds are attuned to the conditions of the past. They would consequently regard as downright dangerous and profane the thought of any man really capable of providing guidance. Indeed with a little adroit coaxing they could probably be persuaded to hang or crucify him. They naturally follow leaders who speak their language, and their language belongs to the world that is gone. In their attack upon modern economic problems they are like boys hunting lions with popguns. Their armament of knowledge and ideas is woefully inadequate to the task.

To say that the educational program has failed, however, is not by any means to place responsibility solely upon the school. This program embraces the entire range of formative agencies and influences in our society—it is the educative aspect of life in all of its manifestations. How important the school may be in this process is a question that cannot be answered with any precision today.

Among the non-scholastic agencies are certain old institutions such as the family and the church, which would seem to be much less powerful than in former times. Particularly must the decline of the family as a closely knit social unit with definite responsibilities for persons of all ages have profound educational repercussions. Also the loosening of the hold of the small community on the individual must involve the marked weakening of one of the oldest and most powerful forces of social control. And then there are the many relatively new agencies and forces, such as commercialized sport, the press, the cinema, the radio, the automobile, yellow journalism, advertising and salesmanship, and the whole vast art of ballyhoo and organized deception, which are pouring their wares hourly into the cultural stream. That any people nourished from day to day on such a mental pabulum could ever prepare themselves to deal intelligently with the complex problems of the present age would seem to be highly doubtful. A people so nourished may be driven to think only after the processes of social disintegration have proceeded so far that thinking will be of no avail.

The school, however, must accept its share of the responsibility for our present plight. An institution that in the academic year of 1929-30 enrolled almost thirty million pupils and students, employed approximately one million teachers, and consumed more than three billion dollars of the social income cannot hold itself wholly blameless for the state of the nation. It *must* be influencing the situation in one direction or another; but accurately to assess its contribution would require a calculus that remains to be devised. A major difficulty resides in the fact that educators have never defined the social problem clearly or at least have never come to any agreement regarding its relation to the school. They have naïvely placed their trust in a vague something called education. Just what this something is they have not known, except that it goes on within the four walls of a school building, that it is good for every personal and social ailment, that it should be taken in large doses both in sickness and in health, and that no individual or society can ever get too much of it. The increase of "education" is looked upon as an indubitable sign of progress.

III

Now, any genuinely functional education must reflect the needs of its own age and culture. Many doubtless would insist that such a statement

is a commonplace and that it has served as the guiding principle for the reconstruction of the American school system during the past generation. They would point to the extraordinary growth of secondary and higher education, the liberalizing of college entrance requirements, the decline of the classical tradition, the expansion of the curriculum, the introduction of vocational training, the growth of extra-curriculum activities, the structural reorganization of the educational system, the development of graduate instruction and scientific research, and a host of other changes which might be mentioned. Moreover, the system of schools, in spite of its historical connection with European antecedents, is unmistakably American. With all of its virtues and vices it could have appeared nowhere else on the globe. Probably no educational system in history was ever more responsive to the changing social situation. And yet this responsiveness leaves much to be desired: it is the product of impulse rather than insight. It reflects no deep understanding of the vast changes that are sweeping over the world and that already in many respects have carried the American people further from their founding fathers than they were from the citizens of ancient Rome. Since the time that many of those now living were born, the material foundations of American life have been altered beyond recognition.

The present age, however, is not to be characterized merely as an age of change. The times are of course marked by rapid and cataclysmic change, but man has known change since he first walked the earth. Driven by powerful appetites, endowed with an acute and restless mind, and placed in an environment of varying stimulation, he has ever been engaged in bringing new things into the world. In early times of course this process of creation proceeded with exceeding slowness. For thousands of years during the Old Stone Age no additions were made to man's stock of material inventions. But with the passage of time, and particularly with the coming of science, the rate of change has been constantly and rapidly accelerated until now a year is as ten, or a hundred, or a thousand, or even ten thousand years in the preceding ages. According to such a scheme of reckoning, a child of ten now has lived longer than Methuselah. And there is no reason for believing that the process of change will be retarded in the future.

People today do live in an age of rapidly shifting scenes. So much is beyond dispute. But they also live in an age of transition. It may of

course be argued that in a changing world every age is an age of transition. In a superficial sense this is true, but in a more profound sense it is false. It is true only in the sense that any age is the child of the past and the parent of the future; it is false in the sense that it assumes change to be purely quantitative and undirectional. Change may proceed for a time without disturbing profoundly the bases of life. Thus, within the limits of a hunting economy, numerous inventions, processes, and ideas may be introduced which merely tend to individualize, elaborate, and perfect that economy. But there may come a time when changes appear that herald the coming of a radically new order—an order based upon agriculture, animal breeding, and settled life. A society in which changes of this second type are dominant is obviously in a period of transition. The American people are living today in such a society. Of this there can be little doubt. They are passing out of an economy based upon simple tools operated by human energy and into an economy based upon complicated machines driven by mechanical power and increasingly subject to automatic control. History may well record that man is now taking the most momentous step of his long journey towards civilization.

It is said that the word "coolie" means literally one who earns his livelihood by means of his own *bitter strength*. If this is so, then with the exception of small favored classes that have appeared in the more complex societies, the great masses of men throughout history have been coolies. In their struggle to live and propagate their kind they have had to depend almost wholly on their own "bitter strength." And in the so-called advanced states, in order that what has been called "culture" might flourish among a favored few, the great mass of coolies, dwarfed in body and soul, have often been compelled to carry a larger or smaller number of parasites on their backs. The Book of Genesis, reflecting the experience of the race while living in a simple agrarian economy, accounted for man's condition by assuming him to be the victim of a curse laid upon him by an angry god. "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread," said the Creator as he drove Adam from the Garden of Eden. Today this ancient curse, which must have come with the tilling of the fields, is being lifted. While in the past man has indeed lived by the "sweat of his face," in the age mankind is now entering he *need* do so no longer.

According to the testimony of the engineers the contribution of mechanical energy to the productive process changed but little from the days of Nebuchadnezzar down to 1830 A. D. Since the latter date, and particularly in the United States, man's "bitter strength" has played a rapidly decreasing role. Today all but a tiny fraction of the burden can be shifted from human shoulders to the sturdy and tireless back of the iron horse. A single power plant, such as the Brooklyn Edison plant on East River, New York, is capable of releasing twice the total energy available in ancient Egypt with its population of four or four and one-half million souls. Out of the iron mines in America alone have come 800,000,000 work horses or 8,000,000,000 mechanical slaves who require neither rest nor sleep. Here is the basis for a genuinely new civilization—a civilization whose image can be found only in the dreams of the past—a civilization of plenty and practically unlimited power in which all things are possible: the conquest of disease, the abolition of poverty, the straightening of the back bent with toil, the enrichment of abundant leisure, the building of majestic cities and charming villages and countrysides, and the conscious direction of energy towards the fashioning of a just and generous and humane way of life.

The period of transition to a new ordering of society is already well under way. The Great War, the economic depression, the revolts of oppressed peoples, the revolutions in various parts of the world, the volatile character of public opinion, and the general condition of institutional instability which seems to prevail everywhere, are all indications of the break-up or inadequacy of an old system of relationships. Although the new order may be like prosperity—just around the corner—it seems probable that decades will have to pass before the human race makes its peace with the strange and powerful forces that have been released. This period, however long or short it may prove to be, will necessarily be marked by severe maladjustment and bitter strife, and will doubtless continue until both civilization and culture will have been born anew in all of their departments. To expect institutions evolved to meet the needs of a simple agrarian or even mercantile economy to survive and function effectively in a complex industrial economy of the type already dimly visible is to expect the impossible.

Vestigial tissues may of course persist for ages, but the discharge of essential social functions requires the creation of appropriate organs.

The problem of life in the emergent age presents two aspects. In the first place, there is the problem of the control of science and the machine, and of the vast power which they have released, in the interests, not of a few or of a small class but of all who do the work of the world. In the second place, there is the problem of the utilization of this power in the building of a culture which will give beauty and nobility and meaning to life.

The first of these tasks is clearly the simpler of the two. And yet its achievement will require the most profound changes in economic and political arrangements. The familiar doctrine that the common good is best served if each individual is encouraged to pursue and safeguard his own interests will have to be rooted out of the *mores* and the institutional life. This means that private capitalism with its dependence on the profit motive, the principle of competition for material gain, and private ownership of natural resources and the tools of production, will either have to be abandoned altogether or be so radically transformed as to lose its identity. In its place must come a highly socialized, coördinated, and planned economy devoted to the task of making science and the machine serve the masses of the people. This will require fundamental changes in the state and in the very conception of government. The line between politics and economics will grow faint and the major function of government will be, not the maintenance of order and the regulation of private enterprise, but the organization of the production and distribution of wealth—the guaranteeing of economic security and freedom to the individual citizen. For millions the right to vote is today a small matter in comparison with the right to work. In fact they have already sold the one for the promise of the other in whole nations. Before the changes already under way have run their course, the Federal Constitution, the forms of suffrage, and many other things for which the blood of heroes has been shed will be deeply refashioned by the onward sweep of events. Even the principle of democracy, not as a social ideal but as a political method, may be found increasingly unworkable in the management of many phases of an intricate, high-powered, industrial civilization. In the production and distribution of goods there are certain best ways of doing things, and these ways are to be discovered, not by the pooling

of the judgments of any number of ignorant men, but rather by following the methods and finding of science. How disastrous may be the trust in Providence, or in uninformed leadership, which is the same thing, is revealed by the present state of affairs of the nation and of the world.

The second task provides the measure of the first. What purposes are the vast resources and energies of the new industrial order to serve? While it represents an enormous improvement on the present to say that they will serve the interests of those who do the work of the world rather than some small privileged group, that is not enough. What are those interests to be? Are they to be the interests represented today by the tabloids, the movies, commercialized sport, radio, jazz and sketches, the artificialities and pretensions of a bourgeois culture, and the haste and superficiality generated by the struggle for sensation and position; or are they to be interests which will encourage the fullest development of man's finest potentialities? There is of course a partial answer to the question in the suggestions already made. Many of the imbecilities and inanities of the present order are traceable directly to the operation of the profit system, particularly where that system rules the cultural life. That man's craving for amusement, beauty, or knowledge should be exploited for purposes of material gain is utterly revolting. And human nature generally so rebels at the thought, that men have had to build up the absurd rationalization that those who manage these undertakings customarily give first consideration to the spiritual and cultural welfare of the people, when in the very nature of the case they must think first of profits or go out of business. It is well known that, with occasional honorable exceptions, they measure success in terms of the balance sheet. If the economic problem on its physical side could be disposed of, as the engineers say is possible, men would be freed from material worries and their energies released to deal with the real problems of living. They could then devote themselves whole-heartedly to the building of a new culture on the foundations of industrial civilization. Some might say that the only hope for the race lies in the direction of reaction—in the resurrection of some simple and idealized society or age of the past. But history cannot be turned back. Science and technology are here to stay, unless they are to be lost in some unspeakable catastrophe. Moreover, that this new culture might manifest great beauty and grandeur is suggested

by the vast power and resources placed at its service. Such an ideal should supply that motive for achievement and personal discipline which America so grievously lacks today.

IV

If the social problem is somewhat as outlined, what are the implications for education? The implications are fairly obvious. The prevailing conception of education has been altogether too shallow. This is reflected unmistakably in the studies educators have made and the books they have written about education during the last twenty-five years. A stranger examining the fruits of their labors would be justified in concluding that they conceive the work of the school primarily in terms of statistics and frequency tables, of buildings, finance, certificates, marks, classification, organization—the mechanics of the educative process. The basic weakness of American education, as of American life, has to do not with forms and structures but with ideals and purposes.

American education will never justify its present cost until its purpose is changed. Today it still pays allegiance to an ideal that was more or less appropriate in the day of free land and a simple agrarian economy but that is now playing havoc in almost every department of life—the ideal of rugged individualism geared to the achievement of material success. It still shares with the more vocal political and business leaders the view that the highest ethical conception yet evolved on the planet is that life is a race in which every man strives to outdo his neighbors in the acquisition of material possessions. Teachers have even advertised the money value of education and have instilled into the minds of the young the thought that additional years of schooling will enable them to displace their less fortunate fellows at the economic trough. How bankrupt this conception is today is perhaps most fully realized by those millions of young men and women who, having attended our high schools and colleges, find the doors to employment closed to them. There is a subtle suggestion running through the whole American philosophy of life that the ideal society is not one in which there is no exploitation of man by man but rather one in which the privilege of exploitation is merely reserved to the strong and the gifted. The school seems tacitly to have accepted this philosophy.

If education is to make any significant contribution to the solution of the social problem, it must reverse its traditional purposes. Instead of striving to equip each individual to surpass his neighbors, it should dedicate itself unreservedly to the guarding and the promotion of the interests of the great masses of the people. No other ideal is in harmony with the needs of the time or is capable of calling forth the deepest loyalties of youth. Moreover, in a closely integrated industrial society, characterized by general interdependence, the welfare of the ordinary individual can be advanced only by making paramount the general good. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the efficient functioning of the present order is increasingly contingent on the intimate coöperation of all the necessary functional members of society. The one point to be guarded with particular care is that the coöperative tendencies developed in the coming generation be made to serve the people as a whole and not some privileged minority. If this social purpose were made to dominate the schools and colleges, the educational forces of the country would be on the road to a genuine reconstruction of education. And so long as they evade this basic issue, however active they may be, they will be engaged in mere busy-work. More than that, they will miss the opportunity of their generation and add one more inglorious chapter to the long history of pedagogical timidity. They will probably even retard the birth of that new social order in which the ideals of justice and humanity, to which they always paid lip service, will be more fully realized.

This entire argument demands a somewhat new kind of teacher and a changed emphasis in teacher-training. Here, moreover, is the crux of the whole question. An education that aspires to social leadership in the troubled age that lies ahead can succeed only as it draws into the ranks of its teachers persons who are capable of leadership, not only in their own ranks, but also in the community at large. Unless they can stand on their feet and defend their polices ably, fearlessly, and successfully in the presence of the most powerful of social forces, they will find themselves relegated to a subordinate role in society. Moreover, such persons will be attracted to the profession, if a conception of education can be fashioned that is genuinely challenging. And this means that the program of the school must be focused squarely on the basic social problem of the age. The fact that

is might make teaching a somewhat hazardous calling would in itself be ghly desirable. The finest spirits of any generation naturally covet those sts which are fraught with danger and which furnish opportunities for eative work and high adventure.

But, if a fair proportion of the more gifted young men and women are terested in the work of education, care must be taken lest they be ruined the process of professional preparation. An intelligently managed society ould not tolerate teacher-training institutions founded on the theory that e essence of teaching manifests itself in the use of certain methods or chniques. A teacher capable of discharging the responsibilities here sug-sted must be deeply and broadly educated. A college for the training of achers should be first of all an institution in which attention would be ntered on the problems of life in the industrial age. Every prospective acher would of course be thoroughly grounded in his particular specialty. n addition he would be a student of the history of American civilization nd culture in their world setting, of the powerful social currents that are weeping through American and world life today, and of the relation of his wn speciality to all of these things. In a word, he would be a living person-lity, in touch with and intelligently critical of his age. His powers would e sharpened and made more effective by a modest attention to what ay be called professional techniques, but this field of interest would be eld in a strictly subordinate position. At any rate the broader emphasis necessary, if teachers are to be more than high-grade mechanics and cap-ble of accepting the terrific challenge of the times. And until teachers olleges become great cultural centers, where young men and women fore-ather to face in realistic fashion all of the complex and dangerous prob-ms of their time and country, the schools will be but the football of social rces and will make little positive contribution to the amelioration of the oubles and perplexities of the age.

ANTONY IN BEHALF OF THE PLAY

Kenneth Burke

At times when the standards of criticism are set by a *receptive* class, as in the decadent stages of feudalism, the emphasis of the critic tends to be placed upon *consumption*. Matters of "appreciation" and "enjoyment" are the touchstones. Conversely, in the Art for Art's Sake movement of recent decades, we find the emphasis placed almost wholly upon *production*. Our practical inventors and business promoters of this period tended to emphasize the productive factor, assuming that in the large the matter of consumption would take care of itself—and there was a corresponding trend in esthetics, with the essence of art being seen in the "self expression" of the artist.

Today, in non-literary fields, we are stressing neither production nor consumption, but the *integration* of the two. And in the esthetic field, this emphasis might be paralleled by a tendency to consider literature, not as a creator's device for self-expression, nor as an audience's device for amusement or instruction, but as a communicative relationship between writer and audience, with both parties actively participating. In such an approach, the poet's "self-expression" or the audience's "appreciation" will necessarily figure, but the main emphasis will be elsewhere.

This reader-writer relationship is emphasized in the following article, which is an imaginary speech by Antony. Instead of addressing the mob, as he is pictured in the third act of *Julius Caesar*, he turns to the audience. And instead of being a dramatic character *within* the play, he is here made

to speak as a critical commentator *upon* the play, explaining its mechanism and its virtues. Thus we have a tale from Shakespeare, retold, not as a plot but from the standpoint of the rhetorician, who is concerned with a work's processes of appeal.

Act III, Scene ii. *Antony has entered with the body of Caesar. Brutus has made his defense before the people, has won their sympathies to the cause of the conspirators, and has departed.*

Antony: Friends, Romans, countrymen . . . one—two—three syllables: hence, in this progression, a magic formula. "Romans" to fit the conditions of the play; "countrymen" the better to identify the play-mob with the mob in the pit—for we are in the Renaissance, at that point when Europe's vast national integers are taking shape, and all the wisdom that comes of the body is to be obscured by our putting in place of the body the political corpus, while we try to run this bigger hulk with the instincts for the little one—the Hobbesian metaphor—and the gloomy error has exalted us, so that no word handles as much, and as quickly, and as inexpressibly, as this word "countrymen," which must really mean, if pragmatic results are the test, that there is glory solely in being outdone by those within our own borders. Anyway, consider how much better my one-two-three arrangement is than was the opening salutation in Brutus' speech: "Romans, countrymen, lovers." He is an orator—but because you of England have thought the untrustworthy Latins eloquent, and because you don't think you are nearly so clever as you'd like to be, I shall seem closer to you if I apologize for bluntness. Yet how much more competent my opening syllables are: how much *truer,* since true to the processes of a spell, stressing a charm's *threeness.*

My Elizabethan audience, under the guise of facing a Roman mob I confront you at a most complicated moment. As a matter of fact, up to this point in our play you have been treated most outrageously. It can honestly be said that, in no major particular, have you been granted those clear and simple responses to which, as customers, you might feel yourselves entitled. Instead, your author has kept you in as vacillating a condition as this very Roman mob you have been watching with so little respect. I

doubt if he distinguishes between the two of you. All that I as Antony do to this play-mob, as a character-recipe I do to you. He would play upon you; he would seem to know your stops; he would sound you from your lowest note to the top of your compass. He thinks you as easy to be played upon as a pipe.

Oh, there have been signs you recognize quickly, that you might feel familiar with the road upon which you have been stumbling. The conspirators have met during storms and in the "vile contagion of the night." They have pulled caps over their eyes. One plucked at another's sleeve. Such labels are easily read by anyone. The streets of Rome have bristled with bad omens. Caesar's wife has cried in sleep that they are murdering Caesar. Outlandish astronomical and biologic marvels have occurred—to point the direction of our plot and give it weight by implicating the very heavens. And finally, Caesar was struck with daggers. Yet these standard things have lured you into a region where you are not competent at all.

Consider the burden you now carry, as I step before the play-mob with the fresh-murdered body of Caesar. We have established a Caesar-principle and a Brutus-principle, though I blush to consider some of the devices whereby the two principles have been set into your minds. Realize for what slight reasons you have been willing to let Caesar die. (The conspirators would not so much as touch him until you also had been brought into their band. And when Casca shouted, "Speak, hands, for me!" stabbing great Caesar, those homicidal hands spoke for you also.) First, we had the portents, beginning with the soothsayer's admonition that Caesar beware the Ides of March. In showing how things were going, these signs prepared you somewhat to go in the same direction.

But in addition, *your sympathies have been poisoned.* Caesar a conqueror, a monarch by reason of his attainments? Yet he was deaf in one ear. He had the falling-sickness, and "swounded" from the intense strain of refusing a crown he coveted. "He had a fever when he was in Spain," cried out "like a sick girl," his feebleness amazing Cassius. Cassius was a better swimmer than Caesar—and when the two of them had leaped into the Tiber on a dare, Cassius had to pull out Caesar, to whom he must "bend his body if Caesar carelessly but nod on him." His wife is barren. For all his determination to be bold, there is a timid and superstitious trait in him.

And worst, for an emperor, on a night of storm and portents he appeared on the stage in his nightgown—so let him die. For such reasons as these you are willing to put a knife through the ribs of Caesar.

Still, you are sorry for Caesar. We cannot profitably build a play around the horror of a murder if you do not care whether the murdered man lives or dies. So we had to do something for Caesar—and you would be ashamed if you stopped to consider what we did. I believe we made Caesar appealing by proxy. That is: I, Antony, am a loyal follower of Caesar; you love me for a good fellow, since I am expansive, hearty, much as you would be after not too heavy a meal; and as one given to pleasure, I am not likely to lie awake at night plotting you injury. If such a man loves Caesar, his love lifts up Caesar in your eyes.

I serve a double purpose. Not only do I let Caesar shine a bit warmly by his reflection of my glow, but when the actual *persona* of the Caesar-principle is dispatched by daggers, the principle lives on in me, who continue the function of Caesar in the play. In the next act, the fourth, the *persona* itself will reappear momentarily as a ghost in Brutus' tent—but on the whole, after Caesar's death, I am the plot-substitute for Caesar. No wonder Brutus, in his address to the play-mob but a short time ago, told them that only Caesar's vices had been slain, while his virtues lived on, still active. So they do, in me, whom you like because I am marked by so serviceable a trait as loyalty. And when this play is over, Antony alone of the major characters will live; for you like to have about you such a man as might keep guard at the door while you sleep. Given certain conceptions of danger, I become the sign of safety. A little sunshine-thought, to take home with you after these many slaughterings. Only as much of the Caesar-principle as will let you relax, is left to bid you good-night—and the Brutus-principle will have died to purchase you this handsome privilege.

I grant that on this last score I am not the perfect recipe. My author has provided purer comfort-recipes for you elsewhere. I show a little too much aptitude at deception, but you should not hold that against me. This trait was merely a by-product of my place in the story: it arose from the fact that upon me fell the burden of keeping things going, and the plottiness of our drama makes naturally for plotting. Besides, recall that I was wholly the reveler as long as Caesar lived. Once he is dead, it is no longer so neces-

sary that I be likable in Ceasar's behalf and warm him by my warmth. Henceforth I am no mere Caesar-adjunct, but the very vessel of the Caesar-principle. So, in expanding to my expanded rôle, I must break the former mould somewhat. Let *savants* explain the change by saying that care-free Antony was made a soberer man, and a bitter one, by the death of Caesar. But it is an obvious fact that if an important cog in the plot vanishes in the very middle of our drama, something has to take its place. In deputizing for Caesar, I found it impossible to remain completely Antony. Let *savants* explain my altered psychology as they will—*I* know it was a playwright's necessity.

You have been made conspirators in a murder. For this transgression, there must be some expiative beast brought up for sacrifice. Such requirements guided us in the mixing of the Brutus-recipe, for it is Brutus that must die to absolve you of your stabbing an emperor who was deaf in one ear and whose wife was sterile. But let us be fair. There is also the fact that you wrested certain political prerogatives from King John, and have been taught to cherish them. Here also was a source of conviction to be tapped as an ingredient in our formula. We discredited Caesar from the very opening of the play, even before he had appeared (significant timing), by letting you see the tribunes angry with certain commoners who were too cordial in their preparations for the return of Caesar after victory. Caesar, it seems, would try to retract your *Magna Charta* from the Romans. Conversely, it is the Brutus-recipe that would prevent this threatened undoing of English political emancipation. So we make Brutus honorable in your eyes by starting his conduct primarily from this fear, which is always your fear as regards conditions in the contemporary state. He is virtuous because he does for Romans what you want your popular leaders to do for you. He takes on the nobility that comes of being good for private enterprise.

On the other hand, he is a conspirator; hence from the general censure takes corruption. For tough Casca is a Brutus-adjunct; and lean, envious Cassius; and Decius the flatterer. Here are qualities which, if lodged in any but yourselves, are not comforting to contemplate—hence are "vices." Brutus' acts, though done in a good cause, have shadiness. One cannot be stealthy as a thief without partially earning the kind of judgments that are laid against thieves. Nobleness, yes, but dirty business. And if his wife,

Portia, speaks for him by her deep affection (as I obediently did for Caesar), note that she is allowed to show this affection only at those moments when he is sinisterly engaged, and answers her evasively. That is: her *love* is conveyed by her *misgivings,* as she worries because her once regular husband roams about at night, in "rheumy and unpurged air" sucking up "the humours of the dank morning," so that even the quality of swamps is drawn upon to discredit Brutus a little, right when Portia is loving him. All told: a fit expiative offering for our offence of murder: worthy, since he was noble and aroused affection, yet yieldable on good legalistic grounds, since he was a conspirator, like a bog. In weeping for his death, you will be sweetly absolved.

At this particular point in the play, however, as I rise to address you, accompanied by Caesar's corse, Brutus has just confronted the play-mob, stated before them the case of the conspirators, and been exonerated. They have clamored their approval. They are convinced that Caesar would have been a tyrant. And they have shouted to the Brutus-principle, who must die for you, "Live, Brutus! live! live!" It is my task, as I stand before the play-mob, to contrive a *peripety* for my audience, reversing the arrows of your expectations. When my speech is finished, we must have set you to making the preparations for Brutus' death.

Well, a dramatist is a *professional* gambler. He prefers playing with loaded dice. And don't think that we should try to bring about this reversal without first making sure that we had furtively dealt ourselves some trumps. We have stacked the cards a little—not so shamelessly as some of our rival Shake-scenes might have done, but enough. Here, I believe, we have drawn from the well of magic. As follows:

Recall how, in the early rites of communion, whereby one man's interests were made identical with another's, the risks of competitive harms were eliminated by a partnership, a partnership established by three distinct symbolic acts: the sharing of one's wife, the exchanging of blood, the sitting down together at table. Of these, the sharing of the wife is dead, buried beneath notions of virtue that go with later concepts of ownership. Yet we give you something similar, in Caesar's dying words, *"Et tu, Brute?* Then fall, Caesar!" which suggests that in Caesar's pain there is more than the pain of knives, there is the pain of wrenched intimacy, eliciting a rebuke

almost Christlike in its replacing of vengefulness with sorrow, as the victim saw that "Caesar's angel" was among his slayers. At this moment Caesar becomes great—for he must die well, at the expense of Brutus. They had shared affection; hence a promise contracted within the deep-lying terms of magic had been violated.

As for the rites at table: When the conspirators had come, to make sure that Caesar would be on hand at the Senate to be murdered, Caesar welcomed them heartily: "Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me." And lastly, as for the blood-communion, how grimly it is vivified and mocked (in pious profanation) when the conspirators, at Brutus' word, bathe in the blood of Caesar's wounds. Three magic formulae, outraged—thus Shakespeare speaks to you in accents you had heard while not listening.

I now stand before you, assigned to the definite task of contriving our peripety, turning the arrows of your future while apparently engaged only in turning those of this unruly play-mob. I shall, by what immediately follows, proclaim myself in all thoroughness the Caesar-principle perpetuated. Here I fulfill the pledge I gave when first I came upon the stage after Caesar's murder. I came ostensibly to reassure the conspirators that I was ready to make peace with them, now that the offence was definitely beyond reparation. I shook hands with them, one after the other—but in the very act of doing so, I forgot them, and fell to musing aloud upon the destroyed magnificence of Caesar. In this way I signaled you to the effect that I was not turning against Caesar, even while "shaking the bloody fingers of his foes." (You wanted me to remain with Caesar, since that has been established as my part in this play. I have been given my label—and like children, you insist that a thing's *true* name is the name you first heard it called by. In your insistence that I remain allied with Caesar, repeating my number, you are grateful for the little cue I give you by my absent-minded musings over Caesar's body. In your satisfaction at receiving from me this sign, to restate my identity even as I make peace with the conspirators, you do not stop to ask why the conspirators should not interpret this sign precisely as you do. Your concern with your own esthetic problem leads you to overlook this straining of verisimilitude, as we thought you would. We judged that, in your eagerness to receive the clue, you would not be overexacting as regard our manner of conveying it.)

Brutus, you will remember, had asked the mob to weigh what he said, and to judge his statements as critics. But, as a matter of fact, he gave them no opportunity to follow his advice. He told them to choose, then stated the issue in such a way that there was no choice. Those that love Rome, he said, must agree that Caesar should have been killed. Those that do not love Rome, should object. If there are any that do not love Rome, let them step forward in protest. No move—hence, the killing is endorsed.

And now, my countrymen, hear me ask the play-mob to lend me their ears, as I proceed to lay before you a plot in miniature. It will not be a very difficult pattern that I ask you to appreciate: a rudimentary piece of translation, by which I awaken in you the satisfactions of authorship, as you hear me say one thing and know that I mean another. "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him"—whereat I praise him so roundly that all the vigor of the Caesar-principle is brought to life again.

> If I were dispos'd to stir
> Your heart and minds to mutiny and rage,
> I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong

Whereat I stir hearts and minds to mutiny and rage. And as the pattern grows clear, I can subtilize it, making Brutus and his band dishonorable by calling them all, all honorable men. And by the time I mention Caesar's will, saying that I would not read it because it would inflame the people, in accordance with the pattern you wait to hear me read the will. You hear them entreat me, you hear me refuse. Then you observe me stepping down, to be among them, that I may better "realize" Caesar's death for them, and make them tearful coroners while I appraise the wounds:

> If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
> You all do know this mantle: I remember
> The first time ever Caesar put it on;
> 'Twas on a summer's evening in his tent,
> That day he overcame the Nervii.
> Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
> See what a rent the envious Casca made:
> Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
> And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
> Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods! how dearly Caesar lov'd him.
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O! what a fall was there, my countrymen;
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O! now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity; these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what! weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

You see my "transference," as I turn from the mantle to the dead man that had worn the mantle. You see the play-mob grow *inflamed* under my talk of *pity* (remember our pattern). There is loud talk of mutiny; the people are about to rush away in anger—but we would "consolidate" our position. And now, rounding out the pattern, I return to the matter of the will, which I had refused to read:

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserv'd your loves?
Alas! you know not: I must tell you then.
You have forgot the will I told you of.

Whereupon I read them the will of a rich philanthropist—and their vindictiveness against the conspirators is complete. You have been engrossed—faugh! you demons, how you do love plottings, for all your censure of plotters. Or is it machinery that delights you—and are you pleased with joining me to make a smoothly running engine of fatality?

Cassius was right in proposing that they slay me, along with Caesar. But Brutus held it was enough to slay the *persona* of the Caesar-principle, on the ground that the *adjunct* would subside through want of its source:

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs . . .
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar.
And, for Mark Antony, think not of him;
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
When Caesar's head is off.

So the Brutus-principle slays half the Caesar-principle, and spares the other half that will in turn destroy it.

Recall these steps: How first, after the murder, I had sent word by a servant offering to join the cause of the conspirators, if they would guarantee me safety. How I fell to musing over the body of Caesar. How, after *exeunt all but Antony,* I had let loose my full-throated venom:

O! pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers;
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue,
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartr'd with the hands of war;
All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds:
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice

Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial . . .

Then, in my speech before the Romans, I fulfilled my promises, starting those processes by which the Brutus-principle, which killed the Caesar-*persona,* is driven to his death by the Caesar-adjunct.

Thank us for this growing thing by growing with it—and in the following scene we shall allow you to squeeze the last available sum of emotion from the mounting sequence, causing it to drip, not by still hotter pressure, but by a sudden cooling. Prominent among the conspirators, there was a certain Cinna. Now another Cinna comes upon the stage, Cinna the poet, ludicrous, the cartoon of a poet, the esthete, such as you have long before now been taught to laugh at (our author is treading on safe ground here). He is an earnest but ineffectual wretch, who probably knows a good line when he sees it, and would doubtless have been entranced to write just such verses as Shakespeare wrote; and perhaps he might even have written them had he known, like Shakespeare, how to draw finesses from toughnesses. Yet our dramatist betrays him for the delectation of you, my stinking audience, makes him your laughing stock, ridicules one of his own Guild for your benefit, though you have no desire whatever to write like Shakespeare, would much rather eat beef than hear a play, but cannot go on eating beef forever, and so come here occasionally, demanding firm, beefy diction. The mob stumbles upon this Cinna, overwhelming him. First Citizen, Second Citizen, Third Citizen, and Fourth Citizen each ask him a different question, all at the same time, insisting imperiously that he answer without delay. It is all quite hilarious, as Cinna is in a daze, comically. And when they ask him his name, and he says with assurance, "Cinna," they start pawing at him in earnest—and when he begs them for a little accuracy, insisting that he is not Cinna the conspirator but Cinna the poet, they unanswerably answer that they abominate the name, and so will pummel him for his verses, and the act ends with the brawling group moving from the stage. You somehow know that the poetic Cinna will suffer no fundamental harm. He will merely be slain—not slain, like a clown hit by cannon balls—yet by this let-down we have reaffirmed in another way the grim

ntentions of the mob. We have clinched the arrows of your expectancy, ncidentally easing our obligations as regard the opening of Act IV.

You will be still more wisely handled by what follows, as our Great Demagogue continues to manipulate your minds. I think particularly of he second scene of the next act, weighted by the steadily organized pressure of events. You will witness a starting quarrel between Brutus and Cassius. After this violence and the sad reconciliation (these men are disintegrating), there will be a contrasted descent to soft tearfulness, as Brutus' drowsy servant plays him a disconsolate little tune in the dead of night (Portia is dead)—and the servant is drowsy, that he may fall asleep as Varro and Cladius have done; then with three men sleeping (and you drooping in sympathy) and Brutus alone awake, there will be, all about, a sleepiness, and a Brutus-loneliness—whereat the Caesar-*persona,* now as a ghost, may return to indicate, by a vague prophecy, that all will be ended for Brutus at Philippi.

LABOR AND RACE PREJUDICE

George Sinclair Mitchell

It costs working people money to be prejudiced. The last five years have made some important sections of the working population of the South realize it. They are taking part in a movement to get rid of some of the prejudice and get more pay by doing so. In the port cities, on the railroads, in the factories, in the mines, in the iron industry, in the city trades, on the land, Southern white and colored people have been getting together for economic purposes in a way that has already brought better conditions to some of them, promises better conditions to many more, and incidentally, carries a possibility of a permanent lessening of the racial conflict that is the South's greatest problem.

One of the results of rigid segregation is the difficulties it puts in the way of the passage of ideas between the two races. News travels fast enough, but ways of doing things, standards of character—all those things which make up culture—move slowly from the white community to the Negro community. Our schools are separate, our churches are separate, our neighborhoods are separate; with how much trouble and uneasiness are things arranged so that a very few upper class whites and upper class Negroes can meet in the same room and talk honestly about the things that concern the two races. Working people do have the job together, but most whites in industry have a status marked off as being above that of the Negro; talk between whites and Negroes on the job is in technical grunts; in orders and *yes's*. Naturally, Negroes preserve the backward side of their own

tradition. White civilization is superior, but it takes elaborate, though half-unconscious, measures, to keep its virtues well away from colored people.

This is an age of fading individualism, but enough of initiative remains to be, still, a powerful drive toward growth. We train ourselves, seek and take advice, rule our faults, in good part because we know that place, security, reward oftener reach the man of intelligence and discipline than the dullard and the lax. White men have a chance to climb if they use themselves alertly and soberly. Colored men have hardly any. In almost every place where Negroes work in the South, and in most in the North, there is a ceiling to Negro promotion. Go out to the nearest railroad repair shop in your locality and ask around in the Negro houses until you find a middle-aged Negro machinist's helper or one in some other semi-skilled job. The chances are he can tell you about three or four white men who as youngsters were brought to him, with a joking request from the boss that the Negro teach them the job. Each white man in turn will have gone up to mechanic's work at seventy-five cents an hour, while the Negro stayed a helper, drawing his thirty-eight and glad to have it, and saving as his contribution to "Negro philosophy" the knowledge of the bitter injustice done him. Why be ambitious, why be anything but "shiftless," when a hundred friends have tried it, and a couple or none have won the worth of the trouble? The wonder is that character survives, and grows, as it does.

Whites and blacks live in common poverty. The South is backward not because it has people incapable as human beings of whatever progress has been made elsewhere, but because it has human beings whose wages, crops, houses, schools, cities, whose skills and customs are those of poverty. We have different cultural traditions, different racial strains, different economies, all through the region, but none of the people, white or black, croppers or slum dwellers, are inherently unable to grow in a growing environment. We have soil and climate and resources out of which wealth for us all can be made. The problem is to organize the making.

A year ago I heard the Negro president of a union of building laborers in a Southern city spend an hour and a half in telling four hundred Negroes what he thought was the reason for Southern poverty. He was a native-

born Negro, no agitator, close enough in his talk to Uncle Remus to sound like home. Among other things, he told this fable. "The rich white man put the Negro in a barrel. Close and hot down there in that barrel. Then he took the laboring white man and told him, 'Set up there on that barrel and hold the Negro down.' Of course, the laboring white man thought he had the advantage, being above the Negro. And the rich white capitalist, he went off in the corner and laughed. But before so long the laboring white man went to sleep and fell in the barrel with the Negro. Then the rich white man come out of the corner and clapped the top on the barrel, and said, 'There now, bedagged if I ain't got you both where I want you.' " That puts it strongly, and imputes more of introspection to the rich man than he probably has, but it tells one big reason why working people in the South stay poor. And it suggests, as it was meant to do, a remedy.

The coal miners in Alabama were the first mixed laboring population that made much use of joint trade unionism. Negro and white miners do the same work and get about the same pay. For decades each race has been played off against the other. In strikes, operators would bring in more Negroes; when Negroes were restless, mine foremen told them pointedly that whites were waiting at the top of the shaft for the Negroes' jobs. Negro and white coal miners have been trying to form mixed unions for nearly thirty years. The movement met ruthless opposition, which the miners met with violence, and the unions easily got a name for being institutions dangerous to Alabama society. Just after the NRA came in, the United Mine Workers organized Alabama again. White organizers and Negro assistants went through the camps, holding up to the big miner audiences fistfuls of silver and paper dollars. More wages and cash wages instead of company-store checks was the promise if men came up and signed. Within a few months most of the miners were in a union, and within a year and half all but a few hundred of Alabama's twenty-odd thousand had joined. About half of them are Negroes. They have regular trade union agreements, a check-off of union dues, and wages that are at least one-third higher.

What the coal miners started, the ore miners and the iron workers took up quickly. Laundry workers, janitors, hodcarriers, unemployed people, cement workers, quarrymen, sawmill workers, brickyard people, green-

house men, began to start unions. Birmingham, as the center of the heavy-industry district, built up a steady dues-paying trade union membership of fifty or sixty thousand in a few months. At least thirty thousand Negroes in the district are in these unions. Some locals are mixed, some are separate for each race. The steel mills had a flurry of organization, but conquered it with company unions. Except for steel—of course, the leading industry—Birmingham is a union town.

Railroad labor is moving slowly toward the inclusion of the Negro in the circle of organizations. White jealousy of Negro work on the railroads is powerful, and with a monopoly of unionism the whites have been able to squeeze Negroes out, here and there, in spite of the formal protection of a seniority system. But the railroad Negroes who are excluded from the white unions are reviving their independent protective unions, and hiring lawyers to fight for Negro status, and are federating themselves into an inclusive association. Some white unions, especially in the shops, are reaching out for Negro membership, usually in separate locals, but often in mixed ones. Negro switchmen, station employees, and freight-handlers have gone into their own local unions much more widely than they did before the depression.

A few other scattered industrial trades in the South have seen Negroes and whites join unions together. In some cotton mills the eight or ten per cent of Negroes on the payrolls have been invited directly into the white locals, and have joined. Atlanta, Norfolk, and some other Southern cities have Negro garment workers who are in unions. Scores of new all-Negro locals, chartered directly from the American Federation of Labor, have been started. They include ten or a dozen different Negro trades. In Tennessee, Negro aluminum workers meet with the whites. In many cities white and colored unemployed people have demonstrated together. But outside the larger industries using heavy percentages of Negro labor, organization of the colored people has been hesitant and weak in results.

In plantation agriculture the story is different. The Communists began a movement among the poorer tenant farmers of one section of Alabama back in 1930. They have reached with agitation at least ten thousand people, nearly all Negroes, and they keep alive a Sharecroppers' Union. Its

members were murderously hunted down in outbreaks against the Union in 1931, but organization survives and is said to be growing. In eastern Arkansas the Socialist-led Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, started this year, has enrolled five or six thousand croppers, about sixty per cent of them Negroes. The same kind of persecution by landlords that appeared in Alabama has appeared in Arkansas, with the same "justification," that Negroes and whites by standing together were endangering the future of racial purity. The charge by all accounts has no foundation in fact, but it gives self-righteousness to worried, pistol-carrying managers of an untenable agricultural economy.

How does all this mixed trade unionism function? It uses a curious blend of traditional Southern ways and new procedures. Nearly always Negroes and whites sit on opposite sides of the union hall. The president is white, the vice-president is colored, the ceremonial officers and the chaplain are apt to be colored. Meetings begin with a hymn, a typical Negro hymn such as can be heard in the deep country, with words and tones which puzzled white throats join in with feebly. The prayer is intimate, asking sometimes for just about what the union wants. Business is really the white men's. The chairman will occasionally ask a Negro to give his view on this or that, and when business is over Negroes will shuffle to their feet and say in respectful language what they think in general, but plainly the Negroes are listening, and learning. Disputes on racial lines are kept off the union floor; if complaints of the union's failure to protect one race or the other come up, they are smoothed out by the officers, behind the scenes. Discipline is almost reverent. When the hymn and the prayer are done again, the meeting is over. Men tramp down the steps, and go home to separate parts of town without a word of good-night. It is plain in the meetings that each race feels under a compulsion to avoid anything that will transgress the formal lines the South has drawn between the races. Union meetings are contrived to answer an industrial purpose, and are held rigidly to service of that purpose only. More surface infraction of the old rules of inter-racial conduct undoubtedly appears in the croppers' unions than in those of industrial workers.

This inclusion of Negroes in trade unions has a triple bearing on race relationships. It makes a new network of understanding between the broad ranks of each race; it offers a channel of advance to the better levels of work for able Negroes, thereby aiding the Negroes' own pride; and it gives Southern laborers hope of using the pressure of the Negroes for general economic and cultural gains with success.

The trade union meetings and the sharing of a common movement, in areas where they become part of the social machinery, build mutual sympathy between the two parts of the population. White men hear the grievances of the Negroes with sympathy. Many a white workman who has been to mixed meetings will say, "I worked with old Jim for fifteen years, and I never thought he was anything but a nigger like all the rest of them, but down there at the hall, Jim got up and made a better speech than any white man there." Negroes sit in the same room with whites, who do not show scorn. A union officer will have Negroes come up to him and tell how the row of lounging Negroes at a street corner that used to mutter an answering hatred to that of the white passers-by would wonder whether the man coming along now might not be a union man and therefore disposed to kindliness and not to curses. What the membership at large gets thus diffusely, the leadership of each racial group in each local gets more intensively. The abler Negroes and whites confer at length on this plan and that, reassure each other that the men underneath will follow a single policy through some period of strain, and in the process gain confidence in one another. A network of leadership of this kind, spread deeply through a bi-racial population, is a weapon worth the South's appreciation in the struggle against the brutal injustices of racial conflict.

Negroes are in the unions not merely for protection of their present status, but with their hopes fixed on an eventual easing up of the restrictions which the whites have enforced against their rising to better jobs. In continuing depression neither race has much advancement before it, but if industry can be brought to new activity Negroes will almost certainly push within the unions for recognition of their abilities. In many plants the whites are for union purposes helpless without the Negroes. Negroes can withhold their support unless they feel that they are being given their share

of whatever combined strength can win. For day to day purposes, the degree of Negro support is registered by Negro dues-paying. A dollar or a dollar and a quarter a month for union dues, paid out of present-day earnings, is a heavy toll, and one not likely to be kept up by men who do not feel that they are being dealt with fairly. Already many instances have come up of Negro memberships dropping away, to increase again when the whites, by negotiation, have restored some Negro job, or raised some category of Negro work from an unskilled to a semi-skilled rate of pay. Such financial pressure, reinforced by the power the Negro has of refusing to support white plans, can grow in importance. Doubtless it could apply in reverse; a too-demanding Negro membership would find itself deserted by the whites.

As competitive individualism gives ground to monopoly and agreement in the realm of business, it becomes plainer to us all that economics is not a mechanical science, subject to immutable laws, but a field of policy-forming negotiation. Some of our perplexities are the natural result of our having lived for a century in an organizational vacuum—confronted as an atomized people with a series of perfected business organizations, we have lost control over our own well-being. Our formal political machinery has been manipulated by industry since industry came. We shall be the closer to economic success when we have built within existing constitutional frameworks a new set of representative institutions, capable of bearing into reality the felt needs of the people. That these institutions will be functional rather than formally political, the growth of trade unionism, consumer organization, and regional administration, all show. If in the South we are to follow the pathway to progress which the rest of the world is taking, we shall have to find within ourselves the full equipment of organization. So long as we contain in an industrial society both a Negro and a white population we shall be helpless in organization, and therefore poor in control of our environment, unless we can contrive a habit of common membership of whites and blacks in societies that care for their common interests.

Although Negro trade union membership in these several ways offers itself as a useful change in Southern patterns, it is of course not without its threatened dangers. Passions are quick all over the South on every phase of the racial question. An overstepping of customary lines here and there

an produce spreading of violence, especially in strikes. In the communities here mixed membership has appeared, large sections of the populations ave been either lukewarm or strongly opposed to the movement. Skilled orkmen in trades which they have protected from unskilled competition y decades of conflict do not welcome the flooding of their narrowed trade nion movements by great *blocs* of the more aggressive workers below, nd they sometimes turn their uneasiness into antipathy to Negro union- m. Middle class folk get many of their ideas about Negroes in general om observation of domestic servants. Negro women whose husbands are emanding higher wages are apt to give occasion for a good deal of front orch conversation about the failing industriousness of the modern Negro. mployers stand to lose both in money and in patronal power when a work- g force, formerly split into hostile racial groups, discovers common action. hey plan elaborate campaigns to strengthen segregation, and they are apable of picking unpleasant agencies for the work in hand. When the ning which threatens is a slow growth in the mutual understanding and ell-being of the bottom groups in an industrial people, much is said of atriotic bugaboos. The danger to the South is not that Negroes and whites ill join for common purposes, but that they will be delayed in joining by he effects of exaggerated fear spread down from the few who can be per- anently injured by the movement.

THREE REVOLUTIONS IN POETRY

*II. Wit and High Seriousness**

Cleanth Brooks, Jr.

FOR SEVENTY-FIVE years Arnold's phrase has defined the inner sanctum of poetry, effectually excluding from it those spurious poetries, *vers de société*, satire, and all the other varieties, either flippant or bitter or trifling, of the poetry of wit. The necessity for high seriousness is the principle still invoked to unmask those pseudo-poets, Dryden and Pope, "classics of our prose." And it is usually the principle appealed to in order to discredit the radical poetry of the moderns. It is convenient in that, although it allows the critic to compliment such poets for their cleverness, it makes it possible for him to deny that they are true poets at all.

In spite of the currency of Arnold's phrase, and its effectiveness, granted his position, the position itself represents little more than a crystallization of the views of the Augustans and the Romantics. It does not represent an advance over them. In the first place, Arnold too believed in a poetic subject matter—that it was "an advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world." He dealt with such in his own poetry. And in the second place, he believed in poetic diction; indeed, he makes the diction of a poem one of the most important elements by which high seriousness is revealed. But even in making the violation of this special subject matter and diction a mark of insincerity, Arnold is foreshadowed by earlier critics. If Arnold states that high seriousness "comes from absolute sincerity," one remembers Coleridge's objection to the play of wit because it implied "a leisure

* This is the second of a series of three articles on modern poetry. The concluding article, "Metaphysical Poetry and the Ivory Tower," will appear in the winter issue.—*The Editors.*

and self-possession incompatible with the steady fervor of a mind possessed and filled with the grandeur of its subject." Indeed, Arnold's high seriousness amounts to little more than this *steady fervor*.

Leisure and self-possession are attributes of the critical intellect, and the poet for both Coleridge and Arnold is *possessed*. The divine madman must not testify against the reality of his frenzy.

There is a sense, of course, in which Arnold and his predecessors, some of whom were discussed in "Metaphor and Tradition," are right. Trifling often betokens a lack of any depth of feeling, and where the poet enters into a compact with his reader to be direct, and to mean literally what he says, such trifling is best disposed of by saying that the poet is insincere. But the play of the intellect and the play of wit are not intrinsically incompatible with the poet's seriousness, or with his sincerity in implying to the reader that he means to be taken seriously. The only way to prove this, of course, for those who demand proof, is to consider the poets themselves. But one must ask a reader brought up in the tradition of the last century to lay aside his prejudices for the moment in considering them.

The Elizabethans wrote a great deal of witty verse, particularly in their sonnet sequences, some of it good, some bad, but in any case, verse which was meant to be read as a sort of courtly *vers de société*. John Lyly's "Cupid and Campaspe Played" will represent very well this sort of verse at its best. It is not love poetry of the type of Burns' "O my luve is like a red, red rose," and critics like Sir Sidney Lee have badly confounded matters by judging it as an attempt at such poetry. At its best this witty poetry is arch, adroit, and instinct with a courtly finesse. The conceits which it employs are often enough instruments of fancy, merely in Coleridge's use of the term *fancy*. But we shall find even in the Elizabethans, and to a greater extent in the poets of the seventeenth century who followed them, a poetry of wit in which the apparent lightness masks more serious undertones. With the metaphysical poets it is often difficult to distinguish between *vers de société* and poetry with more profound repercussions. The limits between the types are vague, and the poets cross over at will. For instance, Habington's "To Roses in the bosom of Castara" is more than *vers de société*. With the last stanza the poem deepens into lyric poetry.

> Then that which living gave you roome,
> Your glorious sepulcher shall be,

There wants no marble for a tombe
Whose brest hath marble beene to me.

Indeed, much of the love poetry of the metaphysicals occupies this shadowy borderland between frankly playful *vers de société* and deeply serious lyric poetry. It is most important to notice that the deepening seriousness, when it occurs, is not accompanied by a correspondent lessening of the play of wit. The poetry never ceases to be intellectual, self-conscious, employing ingenious comparisons, and demanding that the reader remain continually on the alert to catch the swift play of the poet's meaning.

John Hoskins is not employing a barren conceit when he argues ingeniously for the advantages of absence:

By absence this good means I gaine
That I can catch her
Where none can watch her
In some close corner of my braine;
There I embrace and kiss her,
And so enjoye her, and so misse her

The ability to be tender and at the same time alert and aware intellectually is a complex attitude, a mature attitude, but not necessarily a self-contradictory attitude. Only a sentimentalist will feel it to be so. Moreover, one must not make the mistake of assuming that tenderness is achieved in spite of the conceit. The ingenuity of the poem is functional. One has only to remember that with later poets "close corner of my braine" would probably have become vulgarized to "depth of my heart" in order to appreciate its importance in dictating the particular mood and tone realized here. To adduce an even finer example, Andrew Marvell, would be to trespass on T. S. Eliot's brilliant essay on that poet. But one may submit another striking indictment of the view that wit and sincerity are antithetical by calling attention to the religious poetry of the metaphysicals, for surely religious poetry imposes the most stringent requirements of sincerity. To take only one example, consider Donne's "Batter My Heart, Three-Personned God" which after a series of bold figures ends as follows:

. . . . . for I
Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chast, except you ravish me.

The application of the sexual figure to the idea of spiritual chastity is audacious, but most unprejudiced readers will experience here the charm and surprise of great poetry. Notice that here the question of the poet's seriousness—whatever else may be questioned—does not arise. Herbert and Crashaw, even when they fail, always impress the reader as being serious. And they succeed often enough to make their poetry, with that of Donne and Vaughan, the greatest religious poetry which England can claim.

Most destructive of all, however, to the proposition that wit can never be united with seriousness is the case of poetry in which the pun, that most frivolous of the instruments of wit, contributes to serious effects. Donne's poem, "To Christ," has been much admired by even conservative critics, largely, one suggests, because of its simplicity and freedom from conceits. But many such critics have failed to notice the puns in the third and fifth lines of the following stanza:

> I have a sinn of fear that when I have spunn
> My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;
> Sweare by thy self that at my Death, thy Sonne
> Shall shine as he shines nowe, & heretofore;
> And having done that, thou hast done,
> I feare noe more.

The second of the two is quite startling; but "thou hast done" would have been recognized as a play on the poet's name by an age which recognized a similar play in Shakespeare's one hundred and thirty-fifth sonnet. The pun does not disfigure the poem; and it allows the poet to say "thou hast finished" and "thou hast me" in what is literally the same breath.

F. C. Prescott has pointed out an even more striking example of the pun in *Romeo and Juliet*. He shows that the verb "to die" was used in the seventeenth century with the meaning "to experience the consummation of the sexual act," and suggests that there is a shade of this meaning latent in

> *Juliet*. Yea, noise?—then I'll be brief.—O happy dagger!
> [*Snatching Romeo's dagger*]
> This is thy sheath [*Stabs herself*] there rust, and let me die.
> [*Falls on Romeo's body and dies.*]

Prescott points out that the mature and thoughtful reader "will remember Shakespeare's constant word-play—sometimes coarse, sometimes poetical —in this tragedy and throughout. He will note that Romeo puns in his dying speech ("Oh, here will I set up my everlasting rest") and indeed falls with this same word "die" as his last ("Thus with a kiss I die"). The word-play here ceases to be mere pun or witticism and becomes highly poetical, adding greatly to the dramatic effect, though it is perhaps a little more in the Elizabethan taste than ours. Indeed the whole tragedy of love and death is summed up in this last word and corresponding last action of each of the two lovers."

Prescott is quite right in stating that the word-play here is not a mere "curiosity but . . . a genuine ingredient in the scene." For the danger is that the average reader will consider instances of the use of *serious* wit, even when successful, as mere *tours de force*. And considering them that, he will not be able to understand why modern poets have turned back to such devices where the risk of failure is so great, if success means little more than a gratuitous exhibition of skill.

Some of the contributions which the devices of wit may make have already been roughly indicated: the conceit as an instrument of precision (as in Donne's compass conceit) or of concentration (as in Shakespeare's pun). And a very good case might be made out for breaking over the conventional boundaries of the "poetic" in favor of an increased accuracy, subtlety, and condensation thereby gained. But in order to indicate at all adequately the positive values of what we may call *serious wit* one must go into a more general examination of the vicissitudes which have overtaken the conception of poetry since Elizabethan times—in particular one must inspect the *simplification* which overtook the concept of poetry in the seventeenth century.

It was, in general, a tidying process, carried on with the best of intentions under the auspices of rationalism and the new science, and backed by the over-simplified version of the mind which Hobbesian psychology had given, a process which attempted to separate into neat categories the poetic and non-poetic, the emotional and intellectual, the serious and the frivolous, canalizing and departmentalizing the mind. We shall understand the damage which such a process could do and did do to poetry in proportion

as we regard the imagination as the great *synthesizing* agent. Coleridge, in one of his greatest and soundest passages, emphasizes this aspect in stating that the imagination "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities." The poet properly differs from the ordinary man by his superior power to reconcile elements of experience. As a modern critic puts it: compared with the poet "the ordinary man suppresses nine-tenths of his impulses, because he is incapable of managing them without confusion. He goes about in blinkers because what he would otherwise see would upset him." The weight of Hobbes' authority was definitely in favor of the ordinary man. For the imaginative act of fusing what in ordinary experience is inharmonious, the Hobbesian poet tended to substitute the rational act of sorting out the discordant and removing it from the context.

Or to use another terminology, that which the Augustans themselves used: the end of poetry is to amuse and instruct—that is, to instruct through amusing devices. The poet is the expositor. He differs from the writer of scientific prose in that the truths which he has to impart are less sublunary, less urgently practical; and in that he may move with leisure and may decorate his information with pleasing imagery and harmonious sound. Compare this type of poetry with Ransom's "Platonic" poetry where "the moralist, the scientist, and the prophet of idealism think . . . that they must establish their conclusions in poetry" ("Note in Onotology," *American Review,* 1934); and with Tate's "allegorical" poetry in which "the characters, images, symbols, ideas are simple, and are capable of being restated in a paraphrase which exhausts their entire meaning." ("Three Types of Poetry," *The New Republic,* March 14, March 21, April 11, 1934).

With such a view of the function of poetry, the character of the imagery is predetermined. And here we come, of course, upon the basis of Matthew Arnold's high seriousness. A serious expositor, one who endeavors to state "high poetic truth" will use clear illustrations and illustrations which dignify and heighten; he will not indulge in fanciful playfulness; he will not leave the reader in doubt as to what he means; his attitudes will be relatively simple. Quite naturally, Arnold's high seriousness is a function of the poet's sincerity—for the poet is a teacher.

This account of the simplification of poetry (parallel to the better-known simplification of seventeenth century prose) is, of course, in itself an over-simplification. It has fortunately never, even under the full force of neo-classic criticism, absolutely realized itself (though it comes close to it with the dull, didactic poems of the eighteenth century like Grainger's *Sugar Cane.*) And it will be possible certainly to find the didactic view of poetry paid lip service by the Elizabethans themselves. But such an account, even though it necessarily leaves out many important factors and overemphasizes others, seems the best general explanation for the death of the adventurous imagery of the Elizabethans. Furthermore, it allows us to connect the decay of serious wit with the most important other phenomenon of the century—the decay of tragedy.

These two impoverishments, one ventures to suggest, are merely aspects of the same process—the simplification of the poet's attitude. Certainly the expulsion of wit from serious contexts coincides with the enfeeblement of drama in the notoriously undramatic eighteenth and nineteenth centruies. And one need not rest in pointing out a mere parallelism in time. There would seem to be something basically antithetical between the power to project many and varied characters on the stage—symbols rich and many-sided and living with an integrity of their own—and the compact entered into with the reader by the poet to be direct, to mean literally what he says, and to leave the reader in no doubt as to whether to approve or disapprove—that is, to use tied and abstract symbols. The Elizabethan dramatists, like the metaphysical poets, as Eliot has pointed out, employ wit, and Donne, though not a dramatist, is, as many readers have noticed, often very dramatic. Having ventured so far, one may suggest one more connection: that even the stages of the dissolution of wit and tragedy coincide. Great tragedy died first (with the Restoration and the cessation of serious wit) while comedy flourished (with the retention of lighter wit), until it too perished at the turn of the century, falling a victim to an even sterner and coarser moralization which demanded that comedy itself should teach by positive example and not merely by negatives.

One need not, however, claim acceptance for this suggestion of a connection between wit and tragedy in order to summarize some of the results of the impingement of science upon poetry. Poetry, in cultivating the virtues

of prose, acquired some of its limitations too. Richards has pointed out that "Words, when used symbolically [that is, as fixed and definite symbols] or scientifically, not figuratively and emotively, are only capable of directing thought to a comparatively few features of the more common situations." Or (as he states it in another place and in converse terms): "Most descriptions of feelings, and nearly all subtle descriptions, are metaphorical . . ." One need not labor the point. It is no accident that Donne and his followers, who use a complex and difficult imagery, are characterized by a sublety and a flexibility in their attitudes which were lost by subsequent poets. Metaphysical imagery which is always demanding to be apprehended in terms of its sharpness and particularity, becomes worn down to the large and indefinite generality of the more genteel imagery of the Augustans. The "close corner of my braine" reduces itself to "depth of my heart." Poetry becomes a coarser instrument.

Of even more importance, however, is the loss of what I have already spoken of as the *ironical* function of imagery. According to the didactic view, the image quite properly should "both illustrate and ennoble the subject"; the first proviso covers the poet in his role of scientist, the second, the poet in the advantage which he enjoys over the scientist—his power to make pleasant and agreeable the truth which he wishes to inculcate. There is obviously no room here for a negative function—for imagery which shall do other than ennoble. It is true that the negative function is allowed play in the lampoon, satire, and comedy; but by implication these are all lighter, less serious forms. The approbative and the satirical attitudes, in critical theory and to a great extent in poetic practice (even in Dryden), become thoroughly segregated. This seems to me the most serious lesion in what Eliot has called the "dissociation of sensibility."

In the more mature attitudes, the approbative and the satirical are frequently—in the more complex attitudes, necessarily—combined in varying degrees of irony: bitter, playful, tragic, self-inclusive, etc. In the relegation of irony to lighter poems, its essential function has usually been overlooked. The function is an important one. Obviously the poet may use irony to make reservations, to state the "other side," to indicate the mingling of elements in his attitude toward the particular experience. To give a rather simple example of such irony: Yeats, in "Sailing to Byzantium," compares himself to a scarecrow:

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing.

When the poet goes on to indulge himself in the fancy that he will substitute for his natural body "such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make," the figure of the scarecrow serves to make the fancy something more than a playful gesture. It weighs and balances the poem. It sets up just counterpoise to "the sages standing in God's holy fire" and to "the lords and ladies of Byzantium." Most readers will sense at once the "rightness" in this context of the scarecrow figure with its ironical implications.

But more difficult instances of irony in modern poetry—instances which repel the average reader—illustrate essentially the same function. One example must suffice. Ransom, in one of his poems, tells the story of "Captain Carpenter," who resolutely engages in combat with the forces of hell, only to be regularly defeated, and to lose in combat various pieces of his anatomy until there is left only the tongue to shout defiance. The irony in the poem is anything but a matter of simple contrasts and adjustments. It is a rich and complex blending of pity and laughter in which the attitude of the reader, far from being simplified, is developed and complicated. It is important to notice that irony functions here, not only to give precision to the poet's attitude, but also to give a third dimension to the symbol. The Captain becomes a complex symbol indeed, standing for all those who "have too rashly charged the troops of error and remain as trophies unto the enemies of truth." But the plain reader (as Laura Riding and Robert Graves put it) "wants to know definitely whether he is to laugh or cry over Captain Carpenter's story, and if he is not given a satisfactory clue he naturally doubts the sincerity of the poet, he becomes suspicious of his seriousness, and leaves him alone."

This last statement puts forcibly the contrast between the sincerity on which Arnold's high seriousness is based and another concept of sincerity which emerges from our discussion of irony. The two are almost diametrically opposed. Arnold's sincerity expresses itself as a vigilance which keeps out of the poem all those extraneous and distracting elements which might seem to contradict what the poet wishes to communicate to his audience. It is the sincerity of the conscientious expositor who makes his point,

even at the price of suppressions and exclusions. Its characteristic vice is sentimentality. The other sincerity expresses itself as the poet's ability to fuse the conflicting elements of experience in a harmonious whole—as Richards puts it, in an integration of experience, or according to Eliot, in a unification of sensibility. Eliot's unified sensibility, therefore, always has wit as one of its ingredients, just as Richards' poetry of integration at its greatest is regularly accompanied by irony.

The difference between the two conceptions of sincerity will furnish a convenient measure of the profundity of the revolution in poetry which we are witnessing. The second revolution, the Romantic Revolt, as has been pointed out in an earlier essay, did not completely undo the work of the first. It did not clear up the confusion between science and poetry—a confusion as to ends and means and the use of poetic and scientific symbols. It is true that with Coleridge (see Richards' recent *Coleridge on Imagination*) we find a more subtle and mature examination of the functions of symbols. But the fact that Richards has had to *discover* such doctrine in Coleridge is perhaps the best proof that Coleridge's work did not profoundly alter the conception of poetry.

Obviously, the third revolution involves a redefinition of poetry. One may observe that it is a poor revolution which does not imply such a revision. The revised definition in this case will obviously take into account the achievement of the metaphysical poets just as it will take into account the limitations of the Augustans and the Romantics. Since poetry is universal, such a definition, however, can hardly content itself with describing those features which set off the School of Donne from other schools. A definition which would be suitable for a course in seventeenth century literature will not do here, nor will it be sufficient to summarize those features which a Millay or an Elinor Wylie can take over into her poetry—mannerisms or particular adjectives. The difference between metaphysical poetry and other great poetry will have to be treated as a difference of degree, not of kind. Moreover, if it was primarily a confusion between science and poetry which destroyed metaphysical poetry, such a definition will have to state, by implication at least, the relation of the "truth" of poetry to scientific truth—a question which the Marxist critics have recently brought to the fore.

Some further implications may be summarized briefly: the definition will have to shift the emphasis back to the poet's *making;* that is, to the view that *any* material must be regarded as potentially poetic; the poetic becomes such by functioning in a poem and results from the act of the poet's making, not from something intrinsic in the material itself. As a corollary, metaphor must be regarded as functional, and the definition will have to allow a place for complex metaphor—realizing its thoroughgoing differentiation from the static symbols of science. The definition will have to find a place, in spite of Arnold and his predecessors, for serious wit. Most of all, remembering the difficult and discordant imagery of Donne, it will have to emphasize the imagination as the synthesizing agent which (to return once more to Coleridge) "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities."

FRAGMENT OF A MEDITATION

En l'an trentiesme de mon aage
Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues . . .

Allen Tate

Not yet the thirtieth year, the thirtieth
Station where time reverses his light heels
To run both ways, and makes of forward back;
Whose long coördinates are birth and death
And zero is the origin of breath:
Not yet the thirtieth year of gratitude,
Not yet, suffering but a year's lack,
Thanksgiving that mid-mortality's done,
That the new breath on the invisible track
Winds anciently into my father's blood.

In the beginning the responsible Verb
Connived with chaos whence I've seen it start
Riddles in the head for the brutal heart
To count its beat on: all beginnings run
Like water the easiest way or like birds
Fly on their cool imponderable flood.

Then suddenly the noon turns afternoon
And afternoon like an ill-written page
Will fade, until the very stain of light
Gathers up all the venom of the night—
Th'equilibrium of the thirtieth age.

The thirtieth, not yet the thirtieth year
Of wonders, revelations, whispers, signs;
Th'impartial dumb truths of sound and sight
Strict beyond speech, immune to common fear.
Already the wind whistles the revelations
Of the time, but I'll go back seventy years
And more to the great Administrations;
Yet six had gone and all the public men
Whom doctrine and an evil nature made
Were only errand boys beaten by the sun
While Henry Adams fuddled in the shade:

I've heard what they said, in the running tap
Drawing water, their watery words, clear
Like a young harlot's false pellucid pap.
(I've heard the lion of S Street get his cheer)
I understood 'em, the general syllable
In a private ear, lost . . .

For who can tell
What the goat calls to the heifer, or the hen
Even to the cock her love? At thirty years
The years of the Christ, one will perceive, know,
Report new verity with a certain pen.

In the decade from eighteen fifty-one
Where was Calhoun whose bristled intellect
Sumner, the refined one, did not admire?
I am convinced 'twas Calhoun who divined
How the great western star's last race will run
Unbridled round our personal defect,
Grinding its ash with engines of its mind.
Too Southern and too simple, his death's head
Uttered a *Dies Irae* that last day
When Senator Mason in a voice to stun

Read off his speech; then put Calhoun to bed.
They put him in his grave. Does the worm say
In the close Senate of tempestous clay
That his intellect makes too difficult
The grave, as his enemies our life?
It's quiet there for the worm's one fault
Is not discourtesy (give worms their dues)
In case the guest hurried by mortal strife
Enter the house in muddy overshoes.

It was a time of tributes; let me pay
Tribute to a man grandfather knew well,
A stocky man but slight, no symmetry
Of face and eye, yet a distinction
Of the poet against the world; he dreamed the soul
Of the wide world and prodigies to come;
Exemplar of dignity, a gentleman
Who raised the black flag of the nether mind;
Hated, in life, of all; in death praised;
I cannot yet begin to understand
Why we are proud that an ancestor knew
The crazy Poe, who was not of our kind—
Bats in the belfry that round and round flew
In vapors not quite wholesome for the mind.

After Calhoun the local tenements
Of nature, tempered to the exigencies
Of air and fire, blurred with the public sense,
Diffused, while the Black Republicans
Took a short memory to their hot desire,
And honor turned a common entity
Crying decisions from the evening news.
Yet in a year, at thirty, one shall see
The wisdom of history, how she takes

Each epoch by the neck and, growling, shakes
It like a rat while she faintly mews.
Perhaps at the age of thirty, one shall see
In the wide world the prodigies to come:
The long gestating Christ, the Agnulus
Of time got in the belly of abstraction
By ambition, the Bull of pious use.
O Pasiphaë! mother of god, lest nature,
Peritonitis or morning sickness stunt
The growth of god in an unwholesome juice,
Eat cannon and cornflakes—that the Lamb,
Spaceless as snow, may spare the rational earth
(Weary of prodigies and the Holy Runt)
A second prodigious, two-legged birth.

The signs and portents screaming in the air,
The nativity in my thirtieth year
Will glow in the heavens, the myriad fireflies
At the holy hour hovering round the house
Will stream in the night like flaming hair,
And man will scurry with averted eyes
Crouching, peering, silent, a drunken mouse.
The orange groves will blossom, the shining Sierras
Kindle all night far as Los Angeles.
With a noise, threatening, of wandering bees
Coming, angry with the air of their carouse,
The Lamb through the sandpaper gates of life
(Made rougher by the Bull's intenser strife)
Will leap, while the wild-eyed Pasiphaë
By the inscrutable wrath of glory stung
Hears the Wise Men come swiftly to the sea.
The Bull smoothly rolls his powerful tongue.

Paris, December, 1928.

EXPERIENCE OF THE WEST

John Peale Bishop

I. The Burning Wheel

They followed the course of heaven, as before
Trojan in smoky armor westward fled
Disastrous walls and on his shoulders bore
A dotard recollection had made mad,

Depraved by years, Anchises: on the strong
Tall bronze upborne, small sack of impotence;
Yet still he wore that look of one who young
Had closed with Love in cloudy radiance.

So the discoverers when they wading came
From shallow ships and climbed the wooded shores;
They saw the west: a sky of falling flame
And by the streams savage ambassadors.

O happy, brave and vast adventure! Where
Each day the sun beat rivers of new gold;
The wild grape ripened; springs reflected fear;
The wild deer fled; the bright snake danger coiled.

They too, the stalwart conquerors of space,
Each on his shoulders wore a wise delirium

Of memory and age; ghostly embrace
Of fathers slanting toward a western tomb.

A hundred and a hundred years they stayed
Aloft, until they were as light as autumn
Shells of locusts. Where then were they laid?
And in what wilderness oblivion?

II. Loss in the West

Cast out of the play
The man in the coonskin cap;
His curse is a sneer. He has had his day.

The vile rattle
Survives; the wild pigeon gone, and slaughtered
The scarlet wattle.

Repudiate that blood:
What have we to do with the fear that stalked
In a savage unlit wood?

Time lost! He returned
To limitless space. Storm slept in the leaves,
A dripping sun burned.

And the blood dried
Coursing about his bones. In striped fur
A bright beast died.

Yet gaunt, bone, gut, sinews,
Something like a man followed,
And still pursues,

What? Wheel of the sun
In heaven? West wind? Or only a will
Toward self-destruction?

III. O Pioneers!

The white sagebrush desert. Noon.
All day heat. But the nights cool. And
Again yellowing dawn. Aspens on
Mountains and yellow sagebrush on sand.

Blind light bewilders. Blown or trampled out,
You cannot follow in the apparent wind
Your father's footsteps. It is to this end
They would have led you. Turn and turn about

The way is lost to fortune. Forward, back,
Delirium will never find a stream
Running gold sand. Rather earth will crack
Dry on skeletons, skulls in some daft scheme,

Sockets of eyes that perished crazily,
Ignorant of the sun the sagebrush, mad
Even to the dew. A continent they had
To ravage and raving romped from sea to sea.

THE SAINTS

STARVELING THEY trooped
As skeletons
Or as men escaped
Into mere bones,
In hope and rage
As who would say:
All that has age
We must wither away!

And with short steps
On sandspawn and windrack
Staggered. Their lips
Shriveled black;
The louse was famished
In their hair
And ribs unfleshed
The heart beat bare.

A holy void
Heat-silvered sky
Had not destroyed
Unlidded eye.
Dark eyes were burnt
To great holes that saw
Visions that were not
In Africa.

II

Caesar's crown
Leaf by leaf shed
Laurels disown
The eternal head.
They cried: Let us stretch
To the scorpion
This dying itch
Of generation!

Motionless
To the flies of noon
Stretched nakedness.
Pocked like the moon
With extinct rock
Desolately expands
To every look
Bright waste of sands.

No cloud emerges
To dissipate despair.
Remorse urges
The sun's glare,
Sharpens the edge
Of a father's fault
On the bare ledge
Of black basalt.

Subduing time
In naked trance
Construe as crime
Continuance:
All that changes
Confound with scorn.
Each man avenges
One child that's born.

III

The gods alone
Know not age, or the grave.
Sea confronts stone;
Caesar cannot save
Cities, sculptures,
Or a boy's blood.
Only endures
The unchanging god.

IV

Blue kiln of day
That brutal fire
Can but allay
Immortal desire.
The desert rock
Stretching to south
Can only mock
The saint's drouth.

O concreate
And never abandoned
Longing! Dilate
Our love beyond
All loves that age
Or lust consumes,
O thirst and rage
For the lost kingdoms!

Whoever says
Divine has said
Dying. Always
Is word for the dead.
Shall not then bone
Blanched by vision

Desire its own
Lowly dominion?

So that dying thinned
In an alien land,
Wrapped in the wind
On mummied sand
Can but abate
Excess of breath
While we await
The god in death.

V

Now the bow bent
And the string taut
That the shaft slant
Through thought to Thought,
Seen to unseen
Ascent of light
Till being has been
Consumed in flight!

VI

I am haunted by
Hungers in the sun:
An African eye
Singed by its vision
On naked sand
Of the dry desert,
Death-longing sustained
By a dying heart.

So man commits
Burning excess
In the thorn thickets

Of the sun's wilderness.
But at what cost—
Thinned to a breath
Which the wind can exhaust!
That way is death.

ANOTHER ACTAEON

I HAVE COME here fleeing I know not what
Fate. I know not what I fled from
Then in the moonlight, in the glass-gray air
Running in moonlight, in the gray light
Of the grass-wet air. Then in the thickets
I heard them
Scattering light feet, running, spattering
Leaves and crashing (as though they were hunting)
Branches. Naked shadows. Pulsating hoofbeats.
But the thickets dark. There was seen
Neither horn, nor uprearing haunches, nor even
The long low lope of a hound crossing the glade
And leaping with deep teeth into a neck.
It may be it was not a death I heard there.
But here where I have come, to die,
Or merely not to die, is the only question.
What have I fled from? What do I ask for?
I wake to my shame and the wood is lonely.

HOLY NATIVITY

WISDOM THAT was
Before morning's span
Wheeled into space,
One star in its van,
By what mishap
Did that Word descend
To a young girl's lap?
And to what end?

II

A god is conceived
In a revel of thighs,
A girl deceived
By descending skies,
On the countenance
Of her visitor
A fallen glance
As of a star.

But a god is born
Of the body's gash,
To an old man's scorn,
In pain. What flash
Was there? What fall
Of sudden light
On the animal stall
In a stabled night?

III

That beauty beheld
At arm's stretch,
That beauty walled,
Beyond our speech
Fulfilled joy:
A god in play
Or an armored boy
His bronze cast away.

As the sun shakes
In a strong stare
Vision partakes
Of that burning air.
O fabled truth!
Did the god's bride
Know an armored youth
His bronze vest aside?

IV

From beasts the gods first came:
But then those holy thoughts assumed
Their images of shame,
Ignorant they were doomed.

Adoring Leda looked upon
A tumult of wild swan.

From beasts the gods came first:
Descending shone in bronze like men;
But found those shapes accurst
And shook to beasts again.

Europa rode rejoiced in all
That romp of briny bull.

V

Eagle, swan, or dove
White bull or cloud,
Incarnate love
Alone is proud
The arrogant know
In the bestial part
Overflow
Of elated heart.

APPARITION

I HAVE SEEN in the Virginia forest
Cool pallid light of an undersea day:
Coral of the isles arose, encrusted spray,
Branches submerged and overhead wild shell.

What was it then I saw? Flashing sea-scale
Flicker of tail? Sea-bud, sunlight or syren
Smiling, which even in a boy might move
Felicity, or failing scatter foam as hail?

What did I then? Rose, swam or sank.
The end was moss. Around me April chuckled,
The catbird cried upon a dogwood bough.
And day came crashing through pale judas-bud.

COUNSEL OF GRIEF

Assume your dignity
Among forgotten tombs!
Now that the mind assumes
Thoughtlessness of despair
And crazed our eyeballs stare
As ancient statues who
Once appareled in light,
Untoppled amid columns
Falling, stood and unmoved
Saw in the shards below
Smoke the throats of their sons,
Woman, into your night
Accept this elegy.
This is the son you loved.

Living you never refused
Of the palatable sun.
How then will you consent
In death to that dearth
With which the dead are used?
You who lay long content
At the sweet dugs of earth,
O how will you consent?

Assume your dignity.
And in that silence

Beyond experience
Of all our loneliness
Smile! It is a lonely
Mirth the dead have,
But it lasts. And theirs is the only
Smile risks never to be less,
For all their fortune is the grave.

FAREWELL TO NEW YORK

NINE SEA-CITIES
Of Ilion's lineage
Displaced the seas
And earned great wage

In war. Time counterfeits
Change. Their Aprils
Washed violets
Among white hills.

Their summers tanned
Young boys: loosened horses
To shadow the sand
In hard-run courses.

Their rains were told
In cisterns to ease

The thousand-year-old
Olive trees.

Though oxen lowed
Through distress of drought,
Magnificence flowed
And could not run out.

Stone towers had twice
Concealed their crumblings
Before earth-born mice
Gnawed Teucer's bowstrings.

Dug-over orchards
At times would gape
On painted potsherds
Of outlandish shape.

Can the state be less
Whose science exults
In a faultlessness
Of catapults?

Eight sea-cities
Before Ilion shone
Married to seas.
The ninth is gone.

A NOTE ON BISHOP'S POETRY

Allen Tate

Of the American poets whose first books were published between 1918 and 1929, not more than six or seven are likely to keep up their reputations until the end of the present decade. Eliot and Pound are pre-war. Crane, Marianne Moore, MacLeish, and Ransom are among the slightly more than half a dozen. The two or three other places may be disputed; but I take it that since 1929 there has been no new name unless it be that of a young man, James Agee, whose first volume appeared in 1934. John Peale Bishop, whose first poetry goes back to the war period but whose first book *Now With His Love* (Scribner's) came out in 1932, will, I believe, rank among the best poets of the last decade. His position has been anomalous. His contemporaries made their reputations in a congenial critical atmosphere, and they have been able to carry over a certain prestige into what is virtually a new age. (Ages crowd upon one another in a country that has never been young.) But Bishop has lacked that advantage. The first criticism that was accorded him was largely of the pinkish complexion. Mr. Horace Gregory, shrewdly detecting the new poet's technical skill, became quickly concerned about the sincerity of a man who ignored the class struggle. Bishop was not, in fact, asked whether he was a poet but whether he expected to survive capitalism: whether, given his roots in the war-generation and the prepossessions of the "ruling class," he could hope to achieve the portage over to the Main Stream recently discovered by Mr. Granville Hicks.

The problems of poetry must necessarily be the same in all ages, but no two ages come to the same solutions. Happiest is that age which, like the age of Sidney and Spenser, felt no need to reduce the problems to ultimate philosophical terms: our critical apparatus is immeasurably more thorough than theirs, our poetic performance appreciably worse. But our problems are inevitably theirs. There are always the problem of language and the problem of form. The Elizabethan solution was practical, not speculative. The simple didacticism of the neo-classical Renaissance was as far as the Elizabethans got philosophically; but of course they wrote better than they knew. Our knowledge is better than our performance.

In ages weak in form, such as our own age, theory will concentrate upon form, but practice upon the ultimate possibilities of language. Ages that create great varieties of forms, as the Elizabethans did in every branch of poetry, talk about language but actually take it for granted, and score their greatest triumphs with form. The powers of the language were not in the long run determined by theory, but instinctively by those poets whose dominating passion was form: the language was determined by the demands of the subject. The more comprehensive the subject, the broader the symbolism, the more profoundly relevant the scheme of reference to the whole human experience, the richer the language became. The experiment with language as such, is *The Shepherd's Calendar,* and it is a failure; but even there the poet attempts only to enlarge his vocabulary with archaic words for "poetical" effect; and there is no trace of that forcing of language beyond its natural limits that we find in modern verse. Propriety in diction was the problem, and it was ably discussed by Puttenham in his long *Arte of English Poesie,* a work in every respect comparable to *The Principles of Literary Criticism* by Mr. I. A. Richards, who talks not about the propriety of language but about its ultimate meaning; he leaves behind him language as an instrument and, by going into the *kinds* of meaning, turns the discussion to the peculiarly modern problem of form. For form is meaning and nothing but meaning: scheme of reference, supporting symbolism that ceases to support as soon as it is recognized as merely that.

Metrics as a phase of the problem of form needs attention from modern critics; it is a subject poorly understood; it is usually treated as an

ir-tight compartment of technical speculation. Yet surely a metrical attern is usable only so long as it is attached to some usable form. It is curious fact that modern metrics reflects the uncertainty of modern poets the realm of forms. So the modern poet, struggling to get hold of me kind of meaning, blunders into the *impasse* of form, and when he nds no useable form he finds that he has available no metrical system ither. For those fixed and, to us, external properties of poetry, rhyme and netrical pattern, are, in the ages of their invention, indeed fixed but not in he least external. It is probable that there is an intimate relation between generally accepted "picture of the world" and the general acceptance of metrical system and its differentations into patterns.

This is to say that the separate arts achieve their special formalisms ut of a common center of experience. And from this center of experience, his reference of meaning, any single art will make differentations within tself: epic, lyric, tragedy, comedy, each with its appropriate pattern of levelopment. When the center of life disappears, the arts of poetry become he art of poetry. And in an advanced stage of the evil, in the nineteenth entury and today, we get the *mélange des genres,* one art living off another, hat the late Irving Babbitt so valiantly combated without having under-tood the influence that brought it about. Painting tries to be music; poetry eans upon painting; all the arts "strive toward the condition of music"; ill at last, seeing the mathematical structure of music, the arts become eometrical and abstract, and destroy themselves.

The specialization of scientific techniques supplanting a central view f life has, as Mr. John Crowe Ransom showed in a recent essay (*The Yale Review,* Spring, 1935), tended to destroy the formal arts: poetry has in urn become a specialization of aesthetic effect without formal limitations. And, as Mr. Edmund Wilson has argued in *The Canons of Poetry* (*The Atlantic Monthly,* April 1934), the novel now does the work formerly done y epic and tragedy, forms too "limited" and "artificial" for modern minds. The novel is the least formal of the literary arts; it rose, in fact, upon the débris of the *genres*; and it has been able to drive the formal literary arts rom the public interest because, appealing to the ordinary sense of reality ostered by information, science, and journalism, the novelist neither sets orth symbolic fictions nor asks the reader to observe formal limitations.

The poet then at this time must ask, not with what limitations he will be pleased, after the manner of the young Milton, to accept, but whether there are any that he can get. I assume that a poet is a man eager to come under the bondage of limitations if he can find them. As I understand John Peale Bishop's poetry, he is that eager man. It is a moral problem, but that phase I cannot touch here. He has no settled metrics; but that is an aspect of the formal problem that cannot be discussed in the limited space of a note. He is anxious about form; so he constantly pushes language beyond its traditional limits, usually in the direction of painting.

It has been said that Bishop has imitated all the chief modern poets. He has virtually conducted his poetical education in public. But the observation is double-edged. In our age of personal expression the poet gets credit for what is "his own": the art is not the thing, but rather the information conveyed about a unique personality. Applauding a poet only for what is uniquely his own, we lose thereby much that is good. If a poem in Yeats' manner appears in Bishop's book, and is as good as Yeats, it is as good there as it is anywhere else.

More than most living poets, Bishop has felt the lack of a central source of form. He is not the poet of personal moods and idle sensation. He constantly strives for formal structure. He had studied closely the poets of his time who, like Yeats, seem to have achieved, out of a kind of galvanized mythology or by means of a consciously restricted point of view, a working substitute for the supernatural myth and the concentration that myth makes possible. It is I think interesting to observe that in Bishop two contemporary influences, Yeats and Eliot, meet strongly, and meet only in him of all the contemporary poets whom I know anything about: Yeats for form, Eliot for the experiment in language. Only the best Yeats is better than this:

> And Mooch of the bull-red
> Hair who had so many dears
> Enjoyed to the core
> And Newlin who hadn't one
> To answer his shy desire
> Are blanketed in the mould
> Dead in the long war.

And I who have most reason
Remember them only when the sun
Is at his dullest season.

It is not necessary to illustrate the early influence of Eliot on Bishop's style, for it appears in *Now With His Love,* as the scholars say *passim.* I will quote other passages that are harder to "place." To critics interested in poetry as private property it may be said that they are evidently his own:

Temples of Neptune invaded by the sea
And dolphins streaked like streams sportive
As sunlight rode and over the rushing floors
The sea unfurled and what was blue raced silver.

That is from *The Return.* These lines are from *Perspectives are Prescipices:*

Sister Anne, Sister Anne,
Do you see anybody coming?

I see a distance of black yews
Long as the history of the Jews

I see a road sunned with white sand
Wide plains surrounding silence. And

Far off, a broken colonade
That overthrows the sun in shade.

The two poems—they must be read as carefully climaxed wholes—seem to me to be among the most successful in modern verse.

They skirt around the difficulty of form by exhibiting a certain violence of language. The form of *The Return* is a very general idea about the fall of Rome. The implications of the form are not wide; and it is a typical modern form in that it offers a rough parallelism with the real subject—which in this case is modern civilization—and not a direct approach to the subject. Where shall the poet get a form that will permit him to make direct comprehensive statements about modern civilization? Doubtless

nowhere. As a piece of historical insight the "form" of *The Return* is commonplace; yet the poem is distinguished. The poet has manipulated language into painting. The line "Temples of Neptune invaded by the sea" is by no means the same as its prose paraphrase: Civilizations die of an excess of the quality that made them great. We, too, shall perish when we no longer have the temple of Neptune, the form, to preserve up from the limitless energy of the sea, that which the form held in leash. But "Rome" is here not a symbol of anything; our inferences about modern civilization are obvious, but they are not authorized by the poem. It is rather that by means of a new grasp of language, very different for the mere "word-painting" of eighteenth century nature poetry, the poet achieves a plastic objectivity that to some degree liberates him from the problem of finding a structural background of idea.

What I have said about *The Return* applies with even greater force to *Perspectives Are Precipices*. This poem I would cite as the perfect example of the methods of painting applied to poetry. Our analysis of this kind of poetry must necessarily be tentative. Yet I think it is plain that this particular poem has not only the immediate effect of a modern abstract painting; it gives the complete illusion of perspective, of objects-in-the-round. Take the "road sunned with white sand"—instead of "sunlight on a sandy road," the normal word-structure for this image. Even more striking is "Wide plains surrounding silence." I leave it to the schoolmen, wherever they are, to decide whether "silence" is commonly abstract or concrete; yet it is certain that in Bishop's phrase it acquires a spatial, indeed almost sensory, value that would have been sacrificed had he written, "Silence over the surrounding plains."

It is worth remarking here that the line, "Long as the history of the Jews," is the only clear example of "metaphysical wit" that I have been able to find in Bishop's verse. It is possibly a direct adaptation of a passage from the most perfect of metaphysical poems:

> And you should if you please refuse
> Till the conversion of the Jews.

Bishop's line is the more striking for its isolation in his work, but I think it is clearly a violation of the plastic technique of that poem, and hence

a blemish. The influence of Eliot, which could lead two ways, to the metaphysicals and to the symbolists, led Bishop almost exclusively to the latter. And he has perfected this type of poetry in English perhaps more than any other writer.

It is an obscure subject: the Horatian formula *ut pictura poesis* bore fruit long before Hérèdia and Gautier—as early, in English verse, as Milton. But the mixtures of the *genres* acquired a new significance after the late 19th century French poets began to push the borders of one sense over into another. It was not merely that the poet should be allowed to paint pictures with words—that much the Horatian phrase allowed. It was rather that the new "correspondence" among the five senses multiplied the senses and extended the medium of one art into the medium of another. Rimbaud's absurd sonnet on the colors of the vowels was the extreme statement of an experiment that achieved, in other poets and in Rimbaud's own *Bateau Ivre,* brilliant results. But the process cannot go on beyond our own generation unless we are willing to accept the eventual destruction of the arts. There is no satisfactory substitute in poetry for the form-symbol.

It is on this dilemma of symbolic form or plastic form that Bishop is intelligent and instructive. He has recently written: "I am trying to make more and more *statements,* without giving up all that we have gained since Rimbaud." The two poems, *The Saints* and *Holy Nativity,* in this issue of *The Southern Review,* are the result of this effort. The statement is the form, the fixed point of reference; "all that we have gained since Rimbaud" is the enrichment of language that we have achieved to offset our weakness in form.

The new experiment of Bishop's is not complete. In *Holy Nativity* the effort to use the Christian myth collapses with a final glance at anthropology:

> Eagle, swan, or dove
> White bull or cloud . . .

His treatment of the supernatural, the attempt to replace our secular philosophy, in which he does not believe, with a vision of the divine, in which he does not believe either, is an instance of our modern unbelieving

belief. We are not so constituted as to see our experience in two ways. Until we can see it in one way we shall not see it as a whole, and until we see it as a whole we shall not see it as poets. Every road is long, and all roads lead to the problem of form.

THE NEW DEAL: NO PROGRAM OF SECURITY

Norman Thomas

In the clamor of voices praising or condemning the New Deal, here and there one is heard which seeks to describe the New Deal and to give it philosophic significance as a program for reforming capitalism without giving us fascism.

One of the ablest arguments to this effect has been presented by Professor William Y. Elliott of Harvard University in his book *The Need for Constitutional Reform.** That book has attracted attention primarily because of Professor Elliott's interesting suggestions for structural change in our governmental machinery. Yet these suggestions are only a part of his argument, which really concerns itself, as the sub-title indicates, with our national security.

I resist the temptation to discuss Mr. Elliott's plans for Constitutional change and confine myself to what is even more fundamental to his own thinking. This, I take it, is stated in his own words in these paragraphs:

> If we do get a steady progress for business recovery and the restoration of private capital to its necessary rôle, many of the factors of the N. I. R. A. and the A. A. A., and the rest of the pack of New Deal cards which limit production, will naturally and gradually disappear. But a stabilizing control over credit and a more organized industrial self-government ought to remain as permanent contributions to our national life.

* New York: Whittlesey House. $2.75.

> If on the other hand business finds itself either unable or unwilling to coöperate with the New Deal toward an immediate increase in employment, it may look for more state control and state competition —not less. That of course is not the end of the story. The chances are good that the struggle precipitated by such an extension of state socialism would in the end deliver us over to a Fascist reaction. With the fate of business in Germany before them, American business interests will do well, not to expect any real liberty of action under such a regime, even though it might be, in its origins, a business reaction against socialism. (p. 62)

In his fifth chapter Professor Elliott develops the argument that reform of industrial control is or may be an aid to recovery, and on the whole he gives the New Deal Administration credit for intelligence in most of its attempted reforms.

Just because Mr. Elliott has done such a good job in stating his own case for reformed capitalism—whether his case is the same as the President's is another matter—I am using his book as a point of departure to develop my own argument that neither the New Deal nor the business interests, still less both of them in coöperation which is less and less in evidence, can give us recovery, with or without reform, to a degree which will long provide the United States with a reasonably attractive and workable alternative to some sort of socialism or some sort of fascism.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since the appearance of President Elliott's book. In particular the Supreme Court decision against the Railway Retirement Act, the Frazier-Lemke Act for the reduction of farm mortgages, and N.I.R.A., have not only struck a tremendous blow at the New Deal as President Roosevelt has developed it, but have also made it exceedingly difficult for any administration under the Constitution, as now construed by the Supreme Court, to work out a bold and far-reaching program of economic reform on a nation-wide scale. It is in itself a commentary on the nature of our government by the dead hand of a written Constitution interpreted by a judicial oligarchy, that so expert an authority in the field of government as Mr. Elliott and one so bold in suggesting structural changes does not seem to have anticipated anything like the sweeping verdicts which the Court handed down to the confusion

of the New Deal. I find myself wondering if Professor Elliott might not agree with Socialists and the more thoughtful of organized workers that the first and most imperative change in the Constitution must be the adoption of an amendment which will give the national government power to act in these times of stress and strain for the economic salvation of a country in which state lines have long since lost any correspondence to basic economic forces or realities. But again I must resist the temptation to depart from my main line of inquiry which concerns the possibility of an effective reform of capitalism even if the Administration were to receive from the Supreme Court a blank check or complete power to write its own program. By no means all the confusions in the New Deal or the impossibilities of its achieving Mr. Elliott's desires arise from Supreme Court decisions.

Today the New Deal is a singular and not wholly consistent mixture of state capitalism with the President's version of the Brandeis doctrine of the excellence of little business as against big. The first is illustrated by the degree to which the Government has extended, directly and indirectly, its control over banks and banking; by the fact that it is already carrying, through one or another of its alphabetical agencies, between a sixth and a seventh of the real estate mortgages in the United States; and by some features of its agricultural program. The second is illustrated by its determination to break up big holding-companies in the utilities field rather than seeking to reform them or to socialize them, and by the President's sudden and rather belated interest in his own mild version of Senator Huey Long's Share-the-Wealth plan—an end which the President hopes to achieve by a program of taxation for the details of which he obviously intends to hold Congress responsible.

Neither phase of the New Deal at present commends itself to most of the business men of America. Rather ungratefully our Chambers of Commerce forget who rescued them when they almost perished in the stormy seas under the dark skies of the early months of 1933. Some businesses, especially the textile interests, have a particular grievance against the Administration because of the processing taxes which taxes, on the whole, are dear to the hearts of the farmers as a major cause of improvement in their own conditions. Moreover, business has a justifiable fear of

the drift to inflation. Hence, in spite of some gains in the index of business activity, there are few signs of business confidence or of the coöperation between business and the New Deal upon which Mr. Elliott predicates his hope of averting either state socialism or fascism. Indeed, the New Deal does not even coöperate with itself. One of the chief obstacles to a genuine housing program under P.W.A. is the fact that H.O.L.C. and other alphabetical agencies are carrying mortgages on real estate at a higher figure than any housing authority would be justified in paying for the land to build new and decent homes for the workers.

I think Mr. Elliott is probably right in stating that the consequence of this failure of the New Deal and business to coöperate will be a confused and badly thought-out extension of state control and state competition on terms to be far more accurately described as state capitalism than as state socialism. There is, however, a chance that we shall get instead, either a temporary reaction and an impossible attempt to go back to the good old Coolidge days for which business—and the Rhode Island voters—vainly yearn, or a kind of stalemate produced by the struggle of business, the farmers, and to some extent organized labor, to get what they want for themselves. This struggle may be liquidated or submerged, temporarily, in a great inflation (although not one of the magnitude of the German inflation) which I do not believe a business recovery plus the Administration's belated interest in higher taxation will be sufficient to avert. The aftermath of that inflation will be the new crisis which will give fascism, regional or national, its chance.

Where I do not agree with Mr. Elliott is in his belief that at this stage of capitalist disintegration in America any degree or kind of reform can promote sufficient recovery to avert for any considerable period the basic conflict between some kind of socialism and some kind of fascism. Mr. Elliott's warning of what business interests may expect from fascism is timely although it is all too likely to be disregarded. But I do not accept his contention that to struggle for socialism, or the coöperative commonwealth, inevitably will bring about a fascist reaction. That will depend upon other forces in addition to business interests. In Europe fascism has been a middle-class reaction, on the one hand against big business and the international bankers, and on the other against the organized working class.

The fascist demagogue in office, however, has come to terms rather more satisfactorily with big business than with little. (It will be remembered that during the life of N.R.A. big business fared better than little.) My present point, however, is that the struggle of the workers against fascism is not necessarily hopeless if they can bring to the consciousness of farmers and white-collar folks the point that, whatever business interests may think or say, they have a common interest against fascism in planned production, resting on social ownership of the great natural resources and the principal means of production, a state of affairs which is the socialist ideal for the coöperative commonwealth.

The heart of the argument is this: what is really on trial is the capitalist-nationalist system, within the framework of whose institutions and loyalties, the New Deal operates. However one's judgment concerning the virtues or vices of the new Deal may vary, it is certain that its virtues cannot be enough to save us, nor its vices enough to ruin us, at a time when our underlying political and economic system, which it accepts, is in disintegration. The struggle for security, which rightly is Mr. Elliott's chief concern, is a struggle not only against unemployment and the bitter poverty which we have the technical capacity to end at once, but also against the menace of new war which every invention and every advance in collectivism make more deadly. Here the case for any sort of successful arrangements under the New Deal or the old is very weak. Every day's newspapers voice discontent and bewilderment. The degree of temporary business recovery has not been matched by any corresponding degree of recovery in employment. There is no reason to think that $5,000,000,000 will "prime the pump" so that we shall not need future enormous expenditures for relief. I am inclined to think that the thirty hour week is worth trying as a desperate method of combatting technological unemployment; but, if it would work at all under capitalism, it would mean a sharing of poverty rather than of abundance, and it would by no means of itself solve the whole problem of unemployment. Under capitalism it would appear that agriculture can scarcely exist under terms that American farmers will accept without a subsidy paid by consumers to bribe farmers not to produce—this in the face of humanity's need for more and better food and clothing. This program of subsidized scarcity in agriculture has unquestionably operated

further to restrict our export market for cotton, wheat, and tobacco. Still worse, its benefits have trickled slowly, if at all, to such agricultural workers as the share-croppers in the cotton country. Instead, an unknown army of them have been cast altogether adrift or reduced to the even greater misery of casual day-workers by the cotton program. It is simple nonsense to believe that at this late date the Bankhead Bill for subsidizing an American peasantry, that is, for using government credit to put tenant farmers on small holdings, will greatly benefit cotton share-croppers, or indeed do much for any class of tenants. It will greatly complicate the control of crops, a control which is part of the government's present program.

What capitalism has come to in America, what indeed it cannot escape by any modification of the New Deal, is a kind of modern equivalent of the Roman policy of appeasing discontent by bread and circuses. The old automatic controls or adjustments of capitalism have completely gone. The Government interferes, and must steadily interfere, to do something to redivide the milk, no matter if the old cow, by its program, is not encouraged to produce anything like as much milk as we ought to divide. The most recent figures on the national income have to do with income paid out, not income produced—the two are by no means the same. These figures, as given by Robert R. Nathan, Chief of the Bureau of Economic Research of the Chamber of Commerce, are on the face of them more encouraging than the report of Leon Henderson as Chief of the Research Bureau of N.R.A., but Mr. Nathan's figures show that we are still some thirty billion dollars behind the income paid out in 1929. In order to show that labor in 1934 has received 2.5% more of that reduced income, he has to include work-relief payments, etc., amounting to almost $1,400,000,000 in 1934. Here is small cause for hope.

If you want to see how far we are from any solution of our problem, it is only necessary to pick up a popular magazine of the "quality" sort. Here is the mid-summer number of *Harper's,* in which we learn first, that chemistry wrecks the farm and second, that all the real thinkers, even though they be "grave-diggers," have proved by more or less exact mathematical formulas that capitalism has no mechanism of reinvestment whereby it can roll forward in triumphant progress as the Chambers of Commerce still hope. Stuart Chase suggests, but does not say categorically

as I shall, that the picture will not be changed by state capitalism, that is, by a high degree of government ownership or intervention in business which nevertheless perpetuates with small changes the present class division of income.

In my judgment the hope that the capitalist-nationalist system can give us security against war is, if possible, less valid than that it can give us security against unemployment and poverty. Indeed the very plight of capitalism at home leads it to continue and ultimately intensify the competitive struggle to expand foreign markets for goods and investments and to claim for itself the raw materials which it needs. Even a country as blessed with raw materials as the United States is not economically self sufficient. The New Deal, while in continuance of the policies of the Hoover Administration it has moderated the grosser forms of our imperialism in Latin-America which did not pay good dividends, has nevertheless strengthened nationalism and national rivalry. Under Roosevelt, the nominal successor to Jefferson, we have in reality the highest tariffs in our history and are building for ourselves our largest peace-time army and navy. There is a dangerous, half-unconscious, ground swell of sentiment for a "good war" which temporarily is the best form of inflation.

But wars do not stay "good," that is to say, they do not continue to be wars which we can provision and finance with little loss of American life, and the tonic effect of war upon a disintegrating capitalism is precisely the equivalent of a shot in the arm to a drug addict.

It does not follow that, because the case for reformed capitalism is so hopeless, the struggle for a true commonwealth, or better, for a federation of commonwealths throughout the world, is easy. It is true that in the course of that struggle there is a danger in America of arousing fascist reaction. It does not follow that to accept capitalist-nationalism and to work for nothing more than a few mild reforms will save the situation. Regardless of what intellectuals like Mr. Elliott or even such able politicians as Mr. Roosevelt may do, we are in for the kind of confusion and discontent which gives the fascist demagogue his chance. (In America he will deny that he is a fascist.) Even if fascism can be staved off for a time in America, the underlying enemy which is capitalist-nationalism will continue with its threat to the security of mankind. Our one hope lies in our

ability to educate men to the necessity of thinking in world terms and in coöperative terms. When we went in for machinery on a large scale, we laid down the inexorable mandate that we should plan or perish. Wise planning and the maintenance of profit are incompatible. We cannot plan to produce or to share abundance except on the basis of institutions and loyalties which require social ownership of that which is essential to create abundance. In the last analysis, capitalism rests on the economy of scarcity and depends for profit upon the power to maintain scarcity. It is part of the present tragedy that such good brains are put vainly into the effort to patch up and continue for a while longer this disintegrating system. If they were put into the task of educating and organizing workers with hand and brain, in trades and professions, in town and in country, for the achieving of abundance through social ownership, and the end of the class division which has always given us a predatory society, we might make faster progress. It matters, and it matters profoundly, that in the coöperative commonwealth we should avoid regimentation and over-centralization under some sort of dictatorship, but we shall not avoid these evils by struggling to maintain with minor improvements the evils of a capitalism which in the hour of crisis has shown that it has no recourse except a fascist return to new dark-ages. Even in the comparatively few months since Professor Elliott wrote his book, the chances of achieving reformed capitalism under the New Deal or under any of the messiahs who offer us some panacea consistent with capitalism, have obviously diminished. We shall not avoid the evils of fascism by temporizing with reformed capitalism, but only by the intelligence and ardor of our struggle for the coöperative commonwealth.

WALLACE STEVENS AND OTHER POETS

Howard Baker

WALLACE STEVENS calls his new collection of poems *Ideas of Order,* a title which, at first glance, is a rather stiff companion to that of his celebrated but too much neglected volume, *Harmonium.* And indeed the titles do suggest something of the difference between the earlier and the later work. The new poems forage the contemporary scene in their search for order; they are less blithe than the earlier ones, chiefly because they deal openly with specific problems of the last few years, going so far as to mention names like Ramon Fernandez and Karl Marx. And yet "harmonium," as a word, implies much; the earlier poems were successful quests for order, and the new work, with important differences, is a continuation of the old.

Neither the place of *Harmonium* in modern poetry nor its value has been much considered. R. P. Blackmur's excellent study on Stevens (*The Hound and Horn,* January, 1932) is exceptional, but Mr. Blackmur was forced by the magnitude of the question of technique to let his final estimate

Ideas of Order, by Wallace Stevens. New York: The Alcestis Press. $7.50 (*limited edition*). *Poems: 1914-1934,* by Herbert Read. New York: Harcourt, Brace. $2.50. *The King of the Great Clock Tower,* by William Butler Yeats. New York: Macmillan. $1.50. *Selected Poems,* by T. Sturge Moore. New York: Macmillan. $2.00 *XXIV Elegies,* by John Gould Fletcher. Santa Fe: Writers' Editions. $2.50. *Notes of Death and Life,* by Theodore Morrison. New York: Thomas Crowell. $2.00. *Guest Book,* by Witter Bynner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $1.50.

stand in a very condensed form. Consequently the critic of Stevens is under something of an obligation to look back once again rather carefully at *Harmonium*. The following pages will make a small attempt, first of all, to do this.

It is most characteristic of Wallace Stevens, as Mr. Blackmur points out, to take an incident which he has observed, to see it as an example of fate, and to set it down in a deeply meditative form. Stevens' unusual rhetoric is relevant to intense meditation; the surprising words and phrases are, as it were, squeezed out of the poet's being by the very pressure of the observation. All good poets, of course, are not forced by this pressure to use such striking diction, but they are forced to use a diction which, if inconspicuous, is nevertheless unusual. Secondly, a poem of Stevens is often ambiguous in a peculiar way—it preserves the essential ambiguity of the subject matter and of words themselves. Other good poets avoid similar ambiguity by refusing to butt up against the ultimate doubtfulness of things, or, most often, by using new or old detours, to go around it. And finally, it is peculiar to Stevens that his idiom is gay, conversational, and sometimes apparently nonsensical. This is a surface quality, but, though as a rule the poems are serious underneath, their seriousness is also suffused with the surface gaiety.

These propositions demand the careful study which Mr. Blackmur has given them; we, however, shall be able to illustrate them only briefly:

The Virgin Carrying a Lantern

There are no bears among the roses,
Only a negress who supposes
Things false and wrong

About the lantern of the beauty
Who walks, there, as a farewell duty,
Walks long and long.

The pity that her pious egress
Should fill the vigil of a negress
With heat so strong!

The point of this poem is that a pious action is mistaken for lechery, and the feeling of the poet is directed at the fact that an incident viewed from different angles is subject to different interpretations. The clash of interpretations is gay and ironic, but it is also a serious matter; for such clashes are what make all moral decision difficult. The juxtaposing of the virgin and the negress insinuates the unpredictable workings of fate, and the impersonal attitude of the poet in exclaiming, "The pity that . . .," clinches the little incident as an example of fate. The rhetoric is typical of Stevens. *Bears* is an objectification of possible harms; such symbols are a part of Stevens' method, and once apprehended they give the reader satisfaction rather than trouble. The word *egress* suggests a predominant tendency in Stevens' diction—a tendency to Latin roots; most readers with some knowledge of languages will be unhampered by his vocabulary if they will look carefully at his words and postpone questions as to why he used them; other words, of course, must be tracked down.

The poem is slightly ambiguous in that we are not told specifically why the virgin walks abroad with her lantern. The question, however, borders on curiosity, and the answer lies mainly outside the margins of the poem: the poem is an incident, a bit of drama, and not a narrative. But the ambiguity is alluring; conjecture is permissible because of the hint contained in "a farewell duty," and we may guess that the virgin is concerned with her state as a virgin and intends to part from it—this, on the basis of the facts in the poem and of the similarity of the poem to the parable of the ten virgins and their lamps. The lines might have been called "two ways of looking at love," if it were not for the fact that there seem to be more than two; for there are suggestions of still other views of the material, that, for instance, ritual itself is permeated with love. Certainly the opposition of the virgin and the negress is more complex than it may at first appear. And it is this opposition which is the heart of our specimen.

So much commentary is an unkindly burden for so short a poem. But, along with literal meaning and traits of style, the overtones—the quality and scope of Stevens' suggestiveness—must be explored as far as possible. For the aura of meaning which surrounds a poem determines

very largely its worth; it is this to which all approaches are clumsy, and it is this which in Stevens' work has been misunderstood.

Clashes in points of view are the subjects of many of Stevens' poems. His ability to see things from several sides induces at once his intellectual breadth and his admirably impersonal interest in his subject matter. He also favors, as a subject of poems, the perception of order, of a superior kind of pattern, in external nature. It is significant to his mind that he can see lines "straight and swift between the stars." Similarly a wild and disorderly landscape is transformed into order by the presence of a symmetrical vase:

> I placed a jar in Tennessee,
> And round it was, upon a hill.
> It made the slovenly wilderness
> Surround that hill.
>
> The wilderness rose up to it,
> And sprawled around, no longer wild.
> The jar was round upon the ground
> And tall and of a port in air.
>
> It took dominion everywhere.
> The jar was gray and bare.
> It did not give of bird or bush,
> Like nothing else in Tennessee.

The jar acts in the imagination like one of the poles of the earth, the imaginary order of the lines of latitude and longitude projecting around the pole. The jar itself—simple and symmetrical, a product of the human consciousness and not of nature—is a very fitting symbol for man's dominion over nature. The appearance of the wilderness if deftly suggested; in contrast with it the jar is striking, but, after some familiarity with the poem, it is striking chiefly because it is so precisely an opposite to the wilderness. The spare precision of Stevens produces his initially surprising surfaces; and fortunately, since the surfaces of poems are of only momentary interest, his precision also produces that which is of lasting value in his work:

the unmistakable justice of his observations and his combinations of ideas.

The range of his ideas, however, can be got at best in any of his long poems—"Sunday Morning," "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle," or "The Comedian as the Letter C." These are three examples of the finest of modern poems; but we shall be forced to confine our remarks only to the last, which is in many respects the most imposing of the three. "The Comedian as the Letter C" recounts the spiritual adventures of a poet named Crispin. Crispin is small in comparison with the regions through which he adventures, a "merest minuscule in the gales," and is therefore referred to merely by the letter which begins his name; he is a comedian in that he is concerned with "daily" things, just as comedies are, in the classical definition, concerned with daily matters. He is named after the stock valet of Italian and French comedy, he is a valet to experience, and thus he is also a varlet, a knave, etc. His adventures lead him—to resort to rough terms—through a restricted, personal Idealism into sensory realism and thence into a decline into the purely practical. The objective of his adventures is to discover means by which the human faculties can take hold of the world and reduce it to order.

Crispin, at the beginning, is a trifling person, finical and precious, a maker of poems about plums. Consequently he finds himself quite inadequate when he is confronted by the sea during an ocean voyage; his Idealistic conception of himself as the "sovereign ghost" of his experience crumbles in the face of a kind of experience which is too large for him. He is humbled by the sea, and regains his poise only after he enlarges his imagination to the point of being able to grasp the "strict austerity" of the ocean and its "one vast, subjugating, final tone." Then, landing in Yucatan, he uses his new imaginative powers to seek out the principles of order in that tropical scene. By means "of an aesthetic tough, diverse, untamed," he is able to behold "green barbarisms turning paradigm"; he is elated by a thunder storm, for it, like the sea, strengthens his sense of elemental fate.

Crispin voyages northward. In the midst of a meditation in which he weighs the elemental force of the sun against the evasive and richly imaginative virtues of the moon, he discovers the odors that are overhang-

ing a river bank in Carolina; he suddenly decides, in contrast with his earlier Idealistic leanings, that reality may best be grasped by tabulating sensory experience. To advance this kind of knowledge he plans to found a colony. His colony turns out to be only a cabin in which he and his wife, and then four daughters, live. Sapped by the daily routine, he relaxes in his search for answers to his large questions. His daughters, however, become "four questioners and four sure answerers." And Crispin concludes that life goes on, that the world, though subject to various modes of comprehension, continues to be an "insoluble lump."

The drift of this poem is unmistakable. It is not philosophical, though it does have philosophical implications. It is somewhat inconclusive, for it is content to show several attitudes towards experience rather than to choose from them: it seems to be not particularly significant that Crispin ends up a realist. But on the other hand the poem is first and last an exploration of psychological depths. The stuff out of which it is made is the stuff of basic psychological forces, ancient and powerful images, archetypes of experience. Reduced to lowest terms, it is a poem built out of the symbols in which the new psychology is interested—the sun and moon, the sea, the voyages, the primitive, the obscure pursuit which ends in marriage.

The psychological character of this and of other poems of Stevens is obvious when we put his work beside that of other writers who are following similar bents. Here is, for instance, a passage from Thomas Mann's *Joseph and his Brothers*:

> "Much is in doubt," answered Joseph. . ."For instance, is it the night that conceals the day, or the day the night? For it would be important to distinguish this, and often in the field and hut have I considered it, hoping, if I could decide, to draw from the decision conclusions as to the virtue of the blessing of the sun and of the moon. . .Oil and wine are sacred to the sun, and well for him whose brow drippeth with oil and his eyes are drunken with the shining of red wine! For his words will be a brightness and a laughing and a consolation to the peoples . . . But the sweet fruit of the fig is sacred to the moon, and well for him whom the little mother nourisheth out of the night with its flesh. For he will grow as though beside a stream, and his soul have roots whence the streams arise, and his word be

made flesh and living as a body of earth, and with him shall be the spirit of prophecy. . .

With this, compare "The Comedian as the Letter C":

> The book of moonlight is not written yet
> Nor half begun, but, when it is, leave room
> For Crispin, faggot in the lunar fire,
> Who, in the hubbub of his pilgrimage
> Through sweating changes, never could forget
> That wakefulness or meditating sleep,
> In which the sulky stropes willingly
> Bore up, in time, the somnolent, deep songs. . .
>
> Perhaps the Arctic moonlight really gave
> The liaison, the blissful liaison,
> Between himself and his environment,
> Which was, and is, chief motive, first delight,
> For him, and not for him alone. . .
>
> Thus he conceived his voyaging to be
> An up and down between two elements,
> A fluctuating between sun and moon. . .

For Stevens, as for Mann, the moon is the interpreter of things, is mental, poetic, imaginative, feminine; and the sun is the origin and destination of life, physical, masculine, "the essential prose." This information is necessary for a full understanding of many of the poems in both of Stevens' books; it is information, however, which the author gives again and again in the course of his poems. In "Sunday Morning," stanza vii, for instance, the sun appears in its usual character, and the character itself is carefully described:

> Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
> Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
> Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
> Not as a god, but as a god might be,
> Naked among them, like a savage source.

Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky...

And, since night is consistently given the characteristics of the moon, many descriptive passages, like this one from "Six Significant Landscapes," have indeed more significance than mere description:

The night is of the color
Of a woman's arm:
Night, the female,
Obscure,
Fragrant and supple,
Conceals herself.
A pool shines,
Like a bracelet
Shaken in a dance.

Just as the sun and moon are consistent symbols, so are the others. The sea, like the sun, is a source of life, but a more immediate one than the sun; and it, since it is subject to time, becomes an image of fundamental destiny—that is to say, of all things ruled by time and therefore by fate, it is the closest to being eternal and absolute and freed from fate. The various voyages and pilgrimages stand for spiritual changes. The primitive and tropical scene is explored because of its richness in broadly significant, dream-like images. Each of these images is a problem in itself, but often an image like

an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather.

seems to be a product of the obscurer depths of consciousness, interesting in itself but non-significant.

Certainly it is not a coincidence that the sun and moon have the same significance in both "The Comedian as the Letter C" and in *Joseph and His Brothers*. Nor is it a coincidence that scientists, as well as Stevens, regard the sea as a source of life; nor that many men in all ages have meditated on the patterns of the stars. Notions of this kind are as old as specula-

tion about the world. They are at present a peculiar property of the psychologists, but they belong as well to every century—to religion and literature as well as to science.

There can well be questions as to the propriety and value of such symbolism in contemporary poetry. Our attitude to these questions depends on what we ask of poetry. If we grant that it is legitimate for poetry to explore the farthest reaches of human experience, then, I think, we have to accept precisely this symbolism. For such attempts by their very nature force the poet down into the modes of thought which men have always labored upon, and these modes of thought are lifeless without their concomitant images. At least, to support Wallace Stevens, we can insist that our best poets work very much in the fashion that he does. Yvor Winters, for instance, in "Heracles," a poem which is concerned with the modern problem of time and its attendant evils, finds his perceptions objectified in the myth which makes Hercules become a sun-god, that is, timeless and absolute—properties which, as we have seen, Stevens also attaches to things of the sun. And Allen Tate, exploring the spiritual nature of an age of industry and empire, in a poem called "The Last Days of Alice," uses the fiction of Alice and the looking-glass; here, not only Tate's poem but Lewis Carroll's story draws on the ancient, mythical properties of a mirror.

To avoid ambiguity we must attempt now to state how closely we may presume the poetry of Wallace Stevens to be related to modern psychology. Certainly it is unimportant whether we think that Stevens was or was not under the direct influence of psychoanalysis. But it does seem that, as often happens, the direction of his interests has paralleled that of other important men of his time and particularly, it happens, the psychologists; just as, in a similar fashion, the interests of Proust and Einstein, for instance, seem to have paralleled each other. The times that produced psychoanalysis probably gave an emphasis to Stevens' psychical symbols, and perhaps encouraged the use to some extent of "free association" of ideas rather than strict logic in the writing of verse. But the symbols to which psychology has been attentive are the traditional materials of poetry, and no poetry is strictly logical. So we cannot hold that Stevens' poetry

is "explained" by an enumeration of its psychological elements. Psychology, it must be clear, is in these pages simply one convenient instrument for criticism out of the many which would be possible. These poems could be studied and interpreted along any of the various lines that, before the day of modern psychology, the Greek myths, for instance, were studied and interpreted.

And I think that with psychology as an instrument we can go one step further towards describing the essential nature of Stevens' work. We observe that C. G. Jung and Wallace Stevens are contemporaries and that each is interested in his fashion in abiding images such as the sun and moon and the sea. It would be valuable to know how far the paths of their work run side by side and whether they have similar goals in view. Though it is rash even to try, without exhaustive study, to summarize achievements of this kind, still some notes may be offered tentatively.

When the human being, according to Jung, explores his consciousness in its several levels, he becomes acquainted with the sovereign images, the archetypes of racial experience, which we have been considering. These images, he begins to realize, have an influence upon his character and actions. Therefore his ego is not so important as he had thought it, and the demands of his personal desires become less strong. Continuing in his explorations, he gradually comes into harmony with these psychical images. And then he perceives that he is viewing the world not from the purely egoistic point of view but from a new and more or less impersonal angle, from a spiritual platform which is built both of his personal and of racial and human values. The non-personal quality in this new center of consciousness is of greatest importance. For it, Jung seems to say, has the ability to mature, to empower, and to humble men as they must be empowered and humbled, and as they may be by an active social ideal or by an active religion.

The kind of poetry which we have at hand is also an exploration of consciousness. It also aims at an understanding of the archetypes of experience and doubtless does beget a harmonious relationship between the individual and such experience. Moonlight, which Stevens makes synonymous with poetry, is "the liaison, the blissful liaison" between oneself and what Stevens calls one's environment; and this is to say that poetry is a

liaison between the individual and his most complex experience. This liaison, moreover, as Stevens says of Crispin,

was, and is, chief motive, first delight,
For him, and not for him alone...

The liaison effectuates a non-personal attitude: one sees Stevens, in the phrase "not for him alone," gliding over from the egoistic to the impersonal. We can add to our earlier remarks on the impersonal quality of Stevens' poetry that it results simply from the fact that the poet's own wishes and needs have been transformed into a sympathy with the larger figures of his poetry; it is a classical kind of detachment in which there is no lessening of human feeling, the "I" is simply enlarged.

We cannot be content merely to say that Stevens and Jung follow similar paths to similar goals. Such a statement would be both too general and too shaky in details. In Jung, for instance, we wonder how the individual can find in himself memories of racial experience, and how ideas can be inherited; we wonder at the source of the inspiration in a meditative poetry like Stevens'. On the other hand we observe that the impersonal and timeless objective is by no means confined to the poetry of Stevens or the thinking of Jung. Consequently it may be necessary to postulate, for the moment at least, an unchanging spiritual world which is independent of the time process, and with which the human being may come in touch and yet at the same time retain his individuality. Such a world might be said to draw or to pull the individual spirit towards it, and to draw thinking as a whole in the direction of absolutes. This hypothesis would account, for instance, for the fact that love appears as the motive power of the universe, not only in modern psychology, but in Hesiod and Thomas Aquinas and Dante. It would indicate the common ground between Jung's psychology and religion, and between poetry and religion. Certainly it is upon very general and difficult and important grounds that Stevens and Jung are alike. (In this paragraph I have followed the metaphors which V. A. Demant uses in his excellent essay "Dialectics and Prophecy," in *The Criterion,* July, 1935.)

Since Stevens' poetry aims very clearly at an exploration of consciousness, one sees immediately why it has been found difficult by many readers. They have found it difficult because they expected it to do things that it

had no intention of doing. But once readers are somewhat acquainted with the outlands of consciousness, the poetry will be clear. Once the modes of thought of the times which produced *Harmonium* are understood, as they will inevitably be understood, then the poetry will be understood.

We are concerned in Stevens' work with a mental poetry. It is not a poetry of "wit"—not a poetry of intellectual invention like that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; it is not, that is to say, a poetry which, although it, as Dr. Johnson said, surprises and delights by producing something unexpected, aims in the large at clarity and logical progression. Stevens' poetry does not progress; instead it gradually hems in the illusive stuff of the poem. It aims not to expound familiar experience so much as to grasp fundamental experience in all its complexity. It uses a rhetoric of appositives, it encircles and closes in upon its subject matter. It seems to be more like the rhetoric of Donne's sermons than anything else:

> That God should let my soule fall out of his hand, into a bottomlesse pit, and roll an unremovable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there (and it shall finde that there, which it never imagined, till it came thither), and never thinke more of that soule, never have more to doe with it; that of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed, and worme, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper, there should never, never any beame flow out upon me; that that God, who looked upon me when I was nothing, and called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darknesse, will not looke upon me now, when, though a miserable, and a banished, and a damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory, even in my damnation; that that God who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleannesse, and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the Sunne, and the eye of the night, the Taper, and the eyes of all the world, with curtaines, and windowes, and doores, did yet see me. . .that this God at last, should let this soule goe away, as a smoake, as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soule cannot be a smoake, a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darkness, as long as the Lord of light is light it selfe, and never sparke of that light reach my soule: What Tophet is not a Paradise, what Brimstone is not Amber, what gnashing is not a comfort, what gnawing of

the worme is not a tickling, what torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God?

In commenting on this passage, James M. Cline has said that "there is no advance in thought, only a refinement of it, a deepening and a gathering intensity of realization; until finally the great period crashes to a close, still reiterating, still sustaining an incremental movement of passion and of mind" ("Poetry of the Mind," *Essays in Criticism,* University of California Press, 1934).

And Stevens likewise. Stevens' poems are incremental movements of passionate, mental rhetoric. They are "unintelligible" in the way that the passage from Donne, if readers were unfamiliar with the notion of damnation, would be unintelligible, and for the same kind of reason. We may illustrate this incremental rhetoric, this closing in upon the stuff of the poem, and at the same time draw together our remarks on *Harmonium* by quoting one more poem, a poem about clouds:

Gloomy grammarians in golden gowns,
Meekly you keep the mortal rendezvous,
Eliciting the still sustaining pomps
Of speech which are like music so profound
They seem an exaltation without sound.
Funest philosophers and ponderers,
Their evocations are the speech of clouds.
So speech of your processionals returns
In the casual evocations of your tread
Across the stale, mysterious seasons. These
Are the music of meet resignation; these
The responsive, still sustaining pomps for you
To magnify, if in that drifting waste
You are to be accompanied by more
Than mute bare splendors of the sun and moon.

Such is persistently the world as Stevens visualizes it—a small region filled with transitory but significant forms under the eternal sun. We are

like clouds, we "ponderers"; we too are going to our deaths, and during our passage our best efforts are bent to brilliant words. In this poem, as very often in Stevens' work, the rhetoric itself fertilizes the thinking: the thought simply leaps from "gloomy grammarians" to "funest philosophers," from clouds to men, from the transitoriness of the speaking voice to the transitoriness of thought. This conviction that, between the silent eternals, the transitory graces are our best possession, is the motivation of Stevens' rhetoric.

The thirty-three poems in *Ideas of Order* turn upon the same symbols that figure in *Harmonium*. The sun, for instance, appears as the eternal source of things in at least half of the new poems. And the world is still filled with "forms" that require poetic meditation. But the attitude to these symbols has changed. The sun is farther off, or is remembered from another season. The "forms" are complicated because contemporary men and their problems appear among them. The new work bespeaks a need for a practical philosophy and an active social doctrine. And since a number of these poems are expressions of a *desire* for order rather than of order, Stevens' admirable concern with contemporary problems seems unfortunately to have interfered to some extent with the writing of this collection.

In the first place there are notes of regret about the difficulties of the present:

> My old boat goes round on a crutch
> And doesn't get under way.
> It's the time of the year
> And the time of the day.
>
> ("Sailing after Lunch")

The tone of regret carries over into several poems on the seasons, so that Stevens could be accused of falling into one of Crispin's early faults—of writing about vanishing autumn "by way of decorous melancholy." A certain unfortunate nostalgia, in other words, has crept in to replace the fine, firm impersonality of *Harmonium*.

Despair, in some other instances, is associated with specific problems. Here the scene is the Alps:

Panoramas are not what they used to be.
Claude has been dead a long time
And apostrophes are forbidden on the funicular.
Marx has ruined Nature,
For the moment.

("Botanist on Alp—No. 1")

The whole poem from which these lines are taken seems to be relaxed both in writing and in thinking. Claude does not take on the symbolic weight that such personages in Stevens' work usually have: the poem seems to slip into private references. But it does, farther along, set up momentarily a vision of lost order, of the world "resting on pillars," with which it opposes the emotion of despair. This tendency to disorganization is perhaps most painful in the long piece "Like Decorations in a Nigger Cemetery," which, doubtless because of the questionable device for holding it together, seems to be completely fragmentary.

But the greater number of the new poems are manly and staunch, and seem to overcome the new difficulties. The "Dance of the Macabre Mice" is a crisp statement of the dignity of government and its inability to change as the necessities of the people change. "Lions in Sweden" is one of the best examples of Stevens' new work. The lion is here an image or concretion of civil order; as such it has the moral qualities of faithfulness, justice, patience, and fortitude; and it has come to be a decoration for savings banks. It has also been an image for the delight of the soul. The poet, finding it now an inadequate image, discards it with the indication that better images must be hunted out. What these may be seems to remain, in this book, a little in doubt.

In general, however, the new ideas of order are not greatly different from those in *Harmonium*. One of the best poems, "Botanist on Alp—No. 2," puts into brilliant language the favorite theme of the balance between transitory graces and the tug of the eternal. The excellent sense of the power of music reappears in "The Idea of Order at Key West"; this poem ends with the following lines:

The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As the night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,

Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

This obviously is dipped from the clear spring from which *Harmonium* came.

It might well be maintained that some of the new poems have suffered not so much from a revision of ideas as from a relaxing of technique. If we put some potentially excellent lines beside those we just quoted, I think that the looseness in metrics will be noticeable first of all:

In the far South the sun of autumn is passing
Like Walt Whitman walking along a ruddy shore.
He is singing and chanting the things that are part of him,
The worlds that were and will be, death and day.
Nothing is final, he chants. No man shall see the end.
His beard is of fire and his staff is a leaping flame.
("Like Decorations in a Nigger Cemetery")

Though Whitman may not grace these lines, his name would be more welcome than his meter. And this is unfortunate, for Stevens has seized here upon that sovereign image, the sun, with a vigor that few other poets could command. But it is a fact worth insisting upon that the best work in *Harmonium* is in very strict meter and that in a different form it would be worth not at all what it is. Since, moreover, the new poems tend to be intellectual and logical, rather than passionately mental and incremental as are those in *Harmonium,* the need for rigorous form is undoubtedly just that much the greater.

One of the things that should be said about the new work is that at its best it does not deny *Harmonium*. Although it labors a little inconclusively with the social and economic problems of these disturbed years, its solutions are generally an interesting application of the earlier and larger

notions to the specific difficulty. Such application is valuable and necessary. But the earlier notions—the perception of elemental structure in the universe, the balance between the individual and the impersonal—are more valuable than any applications.

II

Herbert Read, in his *Poems 1914-1934*, reprints his collected poems with the omission of a few early pieces and the addition of about thirty new pieces. His work bears a certain similarity to that of Wallace Stevens. At first impact, his pages present a surface which surprises the reader; and on reading the pages the reader finds that he is encountering an erudite vocabulary and an abundance of "sovereign images" like the sun and moon and the sea, each of which has about the same symbolic significance as in Stevens. Both poets write a mental poetry. But these poets oppose each other in fundamentals.

In a note to this volume, Mr. Read writes: "I have made slight revisions in a few of the earlier poems, but just as often the original readings have been restored as being more faithful to the original moods." This is a key to the volume: the poems are poems of moods. This is something that cannot be said of Stevens' poems. For a poem of mood must be a poem that aims to contain the complex whole of the poet's feelings when he takes hold of his work; and certainly the bulk of the feelings which make up this complex must be irrelevant to the poem. A poem of mood must be like the following "Aubade":

Early light
beats down

my body is a beaten
silver leaf

If I rise
it will wrinkle
a tinsel pod

a withered caul
from the womb of night

These lines have a certain charm, and are as slight as the notation of casual feelings at any moment. Over and against the poetry of mood there is, of course, the poetry of meditation and organization in which the subject of the poem absorbs the poet's attention so completely that his personal desires and fancies, his mood, simply disappear.

The point is by no means so small as it may seem. Many poems in this volume have the character of the one which we have just quoted, and the longer poems are frequently made up of such parts. It is not difficult to account for this practice, for Mr. Read has given us his theories in explicit language both in his criticism and in his poetry itself. He values a "free disposition" in the human being: "a free disposition which is that of the sensations and memory—the sensual being"; and he holds that "this being is given coherence, is defined or outlined, by a judgment which is innate." He continues: "judgment emerges from the history of our sensations, is elected by them, and the coherence of personality is indeed the coherence of a natural process; not the coherence of an arbitrary discipline" (*Form in Modern Poetry,* p. 23). His poetry is consistently just such a free disposition of sensations and memory.

And no one could say that it suffers from arbitrary discipline: the question is whether it has coherence, whether judgment has left an imprint on the raw stuff of experience, whether, finally, there is any such thing as innate judgment. It would seem that sensations do not add up to make judgment. Nor are Jung's racial images the same as judgment; nor would be any timeless, spiritual world which we might postulate. For experience in any possible form must be subjected to judgment, and is not judgment in itself. To test judgment one turns to the judgments of other men; judgment must be developed, and can only result from discipline. Otherwise, what, for instance, does maturity mean?—if judgment is innate, why is not a youthful work of art as great as a mature one? To listen for the call of innate judgment is to suffer from an ingrowth of vision; it is to descend into the loneliest and most eccentric Quakerism. The individual becomes so lonely that he is everything, and consequently nothing.

Mr. Read has said that each work of art, by its own inherent laws, must fuse "in one vital unity both structure and content." This, on the basis of the theories which we have just examined, means to him a necessary

abandonment of traditional forms and meters, and, indeed, the creation of a new form for every poem. We can propose that "vital unity" may appear in and may even be promoted by established forms in verse, and that, contrary to Mr. Read's opinion, vital unity does appear in the poetry of Dryden and Dr. Johnson; but our immediate task is to apply these ideas to Mr. Read's poetry.

The unity of a very interesting poem, "Mutations of the Phoenix," may be fairly inquired into. This is a long and serious poem; it is concerned with the nature of the individual, his place in the continuity of life, the sovereignty of his impulses, his weariness in mind and nerves, his limitation to the data of his senses, and his consequent isolation. Though the language is mainly condensed, the poem seems to be long and scattered, a series of spontaneous and often abstract reflections on the subject. The relation of the parts is derived apparently from spontaneous, private associations; therefore it is impossible to say whether one is actually following the poem or not. Its unity is temperamental and, from the point of view of this reader, not a real unity at all. But the poem does progress; it ends with moody, atmospheric lines.

> No sound now.
> No color: all black: a cave
>
> In the cavern's mouth
> the moon is hidden.
>
> Yet still the stars—
> intense remnants of time.
>
> O phoenix,
> O merciful bird of fire,
> Extinguish your white
> hungry flames.

It is very much to be feared that Mr. Read's theories, like this poem, end in the destruction of the individual.

William Butler Yeats is also primarily a poet of mood. The commentaries which Mr. Yeats prints along with *The Great Clock Tower* indi-

cate how elaborately a poet may set about working up his feelings in order to write a poem. The title piece, a short drama on the Japanese model, is partly a vehicle for lyrics. It is atmospheric: a silent queen at last leaves her inaction to dance with the head of a stroller, and the head sings. The lyrics tend to envision the past as if it were still animate, and to comment on the vagaries of emotional nature:

> What can she lack whose emblem is the moon?
> —But desecration and the lover's night.
>
> All time's completed treasure in one place;
> What do they lack O cry it all again.
> —Their desecration and the lover's night.

The play is romantic, mystical, and vague, and no doubt very charming to an audience who is willing to surrender to it. The volume ends with a group of "Supernatural Songs."

It is a nice question, the extent to which Yeats' poetry in general is suffused with the occult inclinations which he professed some years ago in *A Vision,* and which, in the main at least, he retracted later on. In this volume, as in the *Collected Poems,* one encounters constantly his tendency to lose himself in unformulatable sensations, to toy with casual webs of speculation, to treat the local as if it were the universal and the eccentric as if it were the regular, to make in general a private world for himself. It is clear at the very least that Yeats sets no rigorous bound and goals to the field of human activity. But to discover and to set such bounds and goals is perhaps the chief duty of the poet. And, in contrast with Yeats' diffuseness in thinking, it must be remarked that, though difficult and perhaps not too rational hypotheses lie behind the work of Dante or Jung or Wallace Stevens, still their work itself is rigorously consistent, and the hypotheses as well as the structures superimposed on them are not in all ways unique but are closely related to the endeavors of other men. Both Yeats and Herbert Read are charmed by raw experience, though they view it from opposite sides—the one looking upon it with a misty glamorous eye, the other with squinting realism. Refusing to formulate experience, Yeats has really no means of telling the natural from the supernatural. Jealous of

personality to the extreme, Read must let personality shatter itself upon the experience of each new moment. Both stand, by principles at least, quite isolated in ultimate Romanticism.

It seems suggestive to say Yeats is a "singer" and not a "maker." A singer may sing as the fancy strikes him, and a singer with Yeats' talents must do so beautifully now and again. The present book probably does not add to the number of his best pieces; his finest work is doubtless this kind of poetry:

> Sleep, beloved, such a sleep
> As did that wild Tristram know
> When, the potion's work being done,
> Roe could run or doe could leap
> Under oak or beechen bough,
> Roe could leap or doe could run;
> Such a sleep and sound as fell
>
> Upon Eurotas' grassy bank
> When the holy bird, that there
> Accomplished his predestined will,
> From the limbs of Leda sank
> But not from her protecting care.

These are the last two stanzas of "Lullaby" in the *Collected Poems*. The singer's gift is apparent; but what is perhaps not so apparent is that the success of this piece, like that of the justly celebrated "Leda and the Swan," springs very much from the grounding of the poem upon common human experience and upon a traditional formulation of it.

T. Sturge Moore knows as well as anyone the temptations which we have been discussing—the lure of sensation, the attraction of personalizing the world in oneself, the hypnotic tug of dissolution, the glamour of poetic surfaces. But these, for him, are temptations to be held under control, and the distinction of his poetry is its limber resistance to the difficulties of his times. On the side of poetics Sturge Moore inherited a dry, gilt and plush medium from the past century, which he, by careful choice and consideration, has turned, at least in his best work, into a totally sound instru-

ment. On the side of the spirit he has been tempted most by the romantic and mystical tug of Nothingness, specifically, for him, of "silence." The allure of Nothingness and the manner of his devotion to it and his resistance, as well as the quality of his language, appear in the following lines from his great poem, "To Silence," which unfortunately must stand here cut short:

O deep and clear as is the sky,
A soul is as a bird in thee
That travels on and on; so I,
Like a snarled linnet, now break free,
Who in thee have but played before
As youth bathes near a sultry shore.

Then (as a floating nereid sleeps
In the deep-billowed ocean-stream;
And by some goatherd on lone rock
Is thought a corpse, though she may dream
And profit by both health and ease
Nursed on those high green rolling seas)

Languidly drifted with thy tide,
Appearing dead to those I passed,
I lived in thee, and dreamed, and waked
Twice what I had been. Now, I cast
Me broken on thy buoyant deep
And dreamless in thy calm would sleep.

Silence, almost I now believe
Thou art the speech on lips divine,
Their greatest kindness to their child.
Yet I, who for all wisdom pine,
Seek thee but as a bather swims
To refresh and not dissolve his limbs.

In an age of excited trickery in poetry, the virtues of Sturge Moore's work are too easily overlooked, but they are there abundantly for the thoughtful reader.

The new selection is not altogether satisfactory. It omits a number of fine shorter pieces like "Apuleius Meditates." It contains rather fragmentary bits from the dramas, and among these there is nothing from the remarkable "Diamonassa." But it does contain several remarkable long poems including "At Babel," and a dozen or more excellent lyrics, chief of which are those on Silence.

John Gould Fletcher's *Elegies* are sober, meditative poems written at some length on a variety of subjects—an empty skyscraper, middle age, the last judgment . . . . They are poems of interesting passages but doubtful wholes. Passages of brilliant visual imagery often seem scarcely fused with the main line of thought; inventories of observation run on and on, any item of which, it seems, could have been omitted. These bits are generally collected around subjects of current interest; the subject is "covered" something in the fashion that newspaper stories cover a subject. The poems have a tragic tone because they are particularly attentive to the vanities and madnesses of the endeavors of men, and this too general perception of tragedy is consistently resolved by a statement of the oblivion to which all things must come. The metrics are as free as the organization of the subject matter. It seems that if these poems were more compact, if they were concentrated really upon the specific subject of each, that then they would be not less than their best passages, which, as the conclusion of "The Last Judgment" will show, are superbly beautiful:

> For as the body slackens and decays,
> Earth in its long death-agony turns from flame
> To sparks and ash that kindle flame again
> In stranger-visaged and far-wandering days;
>
> Coming with skin of goats or fell of sheep
> From islands where no ship moves, where no tongue
> Of man is heard; where only time is strong,
> To bring the gift of suffering and of sleep.

Theodore Morrison, in *Notes of Death and Life,* lets excellent poetic faculties spread themselves out over pages of diffuse poetry. His themes

are general and vague—the Earth, the Fruitfulness of Spring; he makes general and vague choices—Life rather than Death, a visionary future rather than a squalid present. And he can write easily at length because he is willing to let his lines run on loosely through a profusion of modifiers; these lines, for instance, from "A Hymn of Earth," are about a bee:

> The bumbling thunder of your brusque address
> Becomes a sudden silence as your wings
> Graze at a flower that rhythmically swings
> Her scented throat, upon whose lip you crawl.

As a whole, Mr. Morrison's poetry is not formal, not traditional, not classical, though to the casual reader it may appear to be so, simply because it is easy and because it lies on the page in a familiar manner. Actually the metrics will not bear analysis; and, whether the mechanics were strict or not, form would have to cut deeper than it does here. Poets as different as Wallace Stevens and Sturge Moore may justly be called formal; but Theodore Morrison shows at present a good sense of poetic materials rather than of form.

Witter Bynners' *Guest Book* is a collection of short portraits of the kind of people who attend the house-parties of America. These people are seen more or less from the point of view of another guest; consequently we do not become well acquainted with them, nor much interested in them: they are nice when they have youth, they are bores when they are too snobbish, and some have really perplexing problems. Within these limits, these portraits are very well done.

TEN BOOKS

Randall Jarrell

A GROUP OF Scotch emigrants settled in Pennsylvania, then went south to Virginia; their minister was John Fincastle, called by his Presbyterian congregation the "Scholar Pioneer." He was something of a philosopher; his great-great-grandson, John Fincastle, was so much more of one that he was turned out of the ministry for heresy. When Miss Glasgow's book begins, in 1901, he is living in the Fincastles' old house, in a small Virginia town, Ironside. With him live Grandmother Fincastle, his wife, Mary Evelyn, his sister, Meggie, and his ten-year-old daughter, Ada. *Vein of Iron* is the story of this family.

If Miss Glasgow had been writing fifty or a hundred years ago, she would have given directly the history of Ironside and the Fincastles; today, she chooses to inform the reader obliquely. "Toward Life," the

Vein of Iron, by Ellen Glasgow. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. $2.50. *Kneel to the Rising Sun,* by Erskine Caldwell. New York: Viking Press. $2.00 *Feliciana,* by Stark Young. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *The Furys,* by James Hanley. New York: The Macmillan Co. $2.50. *A Preface to Maturity,* by Jule Brousseau. New York: Crowell. $2.50. *We Too Are Drifting,* by Gale Wilhelm. New York: Random House $2.00. *Time: The Present,* by Tess Slesinger. New York: Simon and Schuster. $2.00. *Lucy Gayheart,* by Willa Cather. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $200. *Time Out of Mind,* by Rachel Field. New York: The Macmillan Co. $2.50. *Chance Has a Whip,* by Raymond Holden. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

first part of the book, tells the story of one day in the child Ada's life. Different chapters are narrated from the points of view of Ada, Grandmother Fincastle, John Fincastle, Mary Evelyn, and Meggie Fincastle. The characters occupy themselves little with action or perception; their concern is recollection. They repeat with unvarying delight, the histories of their families, the names of their mothers, the events of their childhood —things familiar to them, no doubt, but things which the reader has to learn. If one were to begin a novel by making the hero almost drown, so that all his life might "flash before his eyes," the readers would feel that he had chosen a somewhat arbitrary mechanism of information; the reminiscences of Miss Glasgow's characters are almost as extensive, and they have not the excuse of being about to drown. Miss Glasgow selects for their reveries that form of presentation halfway between the modern novelist's version of James' stream of consciousness, and an earlier convention of the reporting of thought: that is, some of the character's thoughts are given in direct quotation, and some are told about indirectly, and, further to vary the texture of the mass, momentary sensory details are constantly thrown in. To handle this method satisfactorily, the writer must have sensibility of almost exaggerated delicacy so far as stylistic effects are concerned. Generally, the method handles the writer.

Telling a story from several points of view has its disadvantages and difficulties. For one thing, the characters' turns of thought, their styles of rumination, must be differentiated; in this, it seems, Miss Glasgow usually fails. What differences of content or elevation there are, are obscured by a certain regularity and heaviness of style. In the novel the little girl differs from the adults mainly in that she thinks in shorter sentences; one reviewer cites this as a notable example of Miss Glasgow's artistry.

Vein of Iron is, in short, what Ada did and what her father thought. It is unnecessary to do more than briefly summarize the course of the Fincastle family.

The story brings them down to the present time; in the last part, "The Dying Age," they move to the city, and Ada (who stands for a sort of pioneer courage and obstinacy) and her father (who adds to these qualities the detachment and skepticism of the philosopher) serve as norms against which Miss Glasgow can set up an industralized urban life.

Miss Glasgow's attitude toward our time is uncompromising. Burke once said, you can't indict a whole people; such a thought would never enter Miss Glasgow's head. It would be difficult to exaggerate her dislike for the superficial qualities of our age. The next paragraph, of excerpts from Miss Glasgow's book, will give a good idea of both the matter and form of her indictment.

"Whatever could not feed the machine was discarded as rubbish . . . They were all alike, especially the women . . . like rows of shallow saucers slopping with idealism . . . A world that had mistaken sensation for happiness . . . Through sheets of rain a drunken man lurched against her as he tossed a pint flask into an alley . . . Drunken boys . . . sprawling . . . The rosy knees and red mockery of their lips . . . The wide insatiable mouth, painted red as a wound, and the flaunting bare knees above rolled stockings . . . Unreal and fantastic as a nightmare . . . Distraught, chaotic, grotesque, it was an age, she told herself, of cruelty without moral indignation, of catastrophe without courage . . . Could the human race, glutted with horrors of its own making, survive upon a material basis alone? . . . A strange country, with its watered psychology, its vermin-infested fiction, and its sloppy minds that spill over . . . There were still teas without tea, and motion-picture faces without a film, and endless gin-drinking, and hastily bitten-back hiccoughs, and stories just a little funnier that went just a little farther than last year, and much talk of prize fighting, which was Puritanically forbidden, and of fox-hunting, which was Cavalierly allowed, and ardent prophecies that the next legislature would permit horse racing and gambling and pari-mutuel betting . . ."

This hardly requires much comment. There is a troubling flavor of the tabloids about most of Miss Glasgow's judgments. Short skirts and rouge have for her the fascination of obscenity. What she says is very familiar, and very obviously said; she has given us her dislike pure, not bothering to make it over into art. A greater writer has said it better:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Thing fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world . . .

Possibly the last great German idealist, according to Miss Glasgow, said that the American people might some day realize that John Fincastle was their greatest thinker; writing about a great philosopher has its difficulties and its rewards. The smallest feather of so rare a bird should engage the reader. We are charmed to know that Kant liked "any music, just so it's loud and military," not because of the opinion but because it was the great Immanuel Kant who held it. But for this interest to attach to John Fincastle, we must feel that he *is* a great philosopher. To convince us, Miss Glasgow would have to be either a great philosopher or a great writer: that is, either give the philosophy itself, or else make a character whose acts and sayings are so entirely consistent and point so certainly in one direction, that they force us to believe in him unreservedly, and to feel that it is merely because it would take too long, and because we might not be able to understand it, that we are not given the philosophy as well as the philosopher.

Miss Glasgow is of course not interested in the first of these alternatives; the most definite thing she says about Fincastle's great book is that it was a "reconciliation between the will and the intellect." This has a familiar ring; a Kantian might say that the reconciliation has already been effected, a psychologist repeat, with some irony, the word *will*. Fincastle believes that "God is essence, not energy." It is hard to interpret the statement, and it reminds us too much of Santayana.

Miss Glasgow has not the professional's attitude toward philosophy, and so fails to give it to John Fincastle. (Quoting Miss Glasgow: "Philosophy is not a reform but a consolation . . . it is still what it has always been, the only infallible antidote to life." The function of philosophy is to—console! One assures Miss Glasgow that this is *not* what philosophy "has always been.") Philosophy for her is essentially ethics; she is decidedly what James called "tender-minded." If Miss Glasgow were aroused in the middle of the night by a burglar, who clapped a pistol to her head and demanded, "Name me a philosopher!" you can be certain it would not be Hume. John Fincastle occasionally says things worthy of himself; but his thoughts in general, his judgments about the "Dying Age," are not so much those dramatically proper to the character of a great philosopher as those that Miss Glasgow happens to have herself. His sayings too often make

up in sententiousness for what they lack in logical acuteness. The reader believes in him as a religious thinker, a noble and sympathetic character—not, however, as a great philosopher.

Miss Glasgow's style may be called commonplace; she is fond of the most obvious and familiar rhetorical devices, and these are most evident in important scenes, scenes in which she depicts some irresistible emotion, some mystical rapture. In general, her style is a good, average, useful style, but when one compares it with a first-rate one, both its inadequacies and ornaments become obvious. This style is at its best in occasional very slight, very sensitive, discriminations, especially in similes designed to convey the effect of sense perceptions. Some of these are unusually successful: "The syllables were as empty as old wasps' nests . . . The row of sandstone slabs, as yellow as old teeth . . ."

Miss Glasgow is generally better in handling unpleasant scenes than in handling pleasant ones. In fact, it is surprising to see how much she depends upon shock as an aesthetic device; Miss Glasgow, in a review, once spoke with energetic despair of the methods and effects we associate with such Southern writers as Faulkner and Caldwell. Miss Glasgow is at times not so far removed from them as she might think.

One feels about *Vein of Iron* that it was intended to be a great book; the plan of the whole novel is very impressive; and yet the texture and details are too often commonplace, the words of the characters too often have the value of something overheard in the street or over the telephone—no more. Miss Glasgow has seen to the spirit, and let the letter take care of itself. Then too, Miss Glasgow comes to her work hardened, full of prejudice and presupposition.

Still, Miss Glasgow's book has considerable power. We readily believe in the characters as real people, in the story as something that really happened; some of the book, about the pioneers, about Grandmother Fincastle, about John Fincastle, will affect the reader unreservedly. Particularly affecting is such a scene as that in which Grandmother Fincastle comes to Ada, at the birth of her child.

II

Mr. Caldwell's effects range from particularly brutal to quite unusually sensitive ones; who else would have named three poor girls on a

Georgia farm, Rosamunda, Griselda, and Darling Jill? He is certainly a born humorist—if one ever doesn't laugh when Mr. Caldwell wants one to, it is only because one is too horrified. He is equally at home with the typical and the odd, a deputy sheriff and an albino. He generally depends on understatement and repetition, rather than exaggeration, for comic effect. The best thing one can do with Mr. Caldwell's peculiar variety of humor is to accept it with gratitude.

However, there is another element in his serious work—a preoccupation with brutal, violent, and obscene subject matter—that is not in the least peculiar to Mr. Caldwell. It is more evident than it has ever been in his latest book of short stories. There is no mixture of elements in them; they class themselves automatically as serious or humorous. Not a single story in *Kneel to the Rising Sun* is without a murder, a rape, or some scene of the utmost violence and brutality. Most of them, if merely related baldly as anecdotes, would have a considerable physiological effect on the reader; told by Mr. Caldwell, who lavishes all of his very considerable powers on them, and whose attitude and methods are those of the humorist, they are horrible to an extraordinary extent: the reader can actually feel his stomach contracting. If Mr. Caldwell is subjecting one to this nausea gratuitously, it is difficult not to feel for him a violent dislike; one is forced to look for circumstances which will explain or justify his methods.

About most of these stories one can say, as Goya did, "I have seen it," or, as Ambrose Bierce said in a different connection, "Can Such Things Be?" That is, they are social documents, instruments of protest against society; we accept the discomfort that attends reading such a story because we feel that it is true, that we ought to know it. After reading the *Agamemnon* or *Lear* we feel no desire to *do* anything at all; but after reading a successful story of this other kind, we are full of a horrified protest, we wish very violently that we could do something about such things.

Some of the stories, however, are not of this sort. In them the obscene or gruesome subject matter is used deliberately, merely to increase the effect of the story. This is, in the last analysis, an insult to the reader, an implicit assumption of his aesthetic stupidity; the writer believes that the reader will not be able to differentiate the effect of the shocking subject matter from the effect of the story as a work of art proper, and, since the

total effect is so large, will assume that the story must have been extraordinarily fine. I do not mean this condemnation to be so sweeping as it sounds (nor do I mean to say that this assumption about the reader is necessarily conscious on the part of the writer), but certainly the indiscriminate or evident use of the principle can only result in failure. After all, the entire point of a trick is that you don't see how it is done. In such scenes as the death of Emma Bovary, Kiriloff's suicide, the blinding of Oedipus, the subject matter has its effect; but, in the first place, the scenes are so carefully done that we notice the form more than the matter; and, in the second place, the blinding of Oedipus means something, it has an obvious relevance. Mr. Caldwell would have told you of the act for its own sake, and besides have told you so vividly, and in so much detail, that you would virtually feel your own finger nail against your own eyes. The writer had better remember that even the most gruesome and tragic art must give the reader pleasure. If the aesthetic pleasure we get from these stories outweighs the unpleasant effect of the subjects, then they are successful; but if this is not the case, there is no reason why we would show the slightest mercy to Mr. Caldwell.

It is much easier to understand than to pardon such conduct on the writer's part. In the first place, if you habitually write about murders and rapes, under peculiarly trying circumstances, in a peculiarily brutal manner, who will have the courage to call you sentimental?—and we live in an age that eschews sentimentality as if it were a good deal more than the devil. (Actually, of course, a writer may be just as sentimental in laying undue emphasis on sexual crimes as on dying mothers: *sentimental,* like *scientific,* is an adjective that relates to method, and not to matter.)

There is another more important cause. Valery says about the poet that he is like a man who carries ten-pound weights up to the roof, and finally drops them all at once on the head of a passer-by. That is, the writer does not get from his work as he writes and reads it the same aesthetic shock that the reader does; and since the writer is accustomed to reading other stories, and having them produce a decided effect on him, he is disquieted at not being equally affected by his own. But the bare facts of murder and rape have as much effect on the writer as on the reader: and the writer, confusing this shock with aesthetic shock, may take always to

writing stories of the kind that have so much effect on him as he writes them. (Just so, an author frequently chooses solemn or overwhelming subjects to write about; he is so impressed at writing about Life and Death that he does not notice that he is saying nothing of the slightest importance about either. Miss Millay's "Renascence" is one of the best examples of this fault.) The writer's subject matter will of course become more violent and more shocking all the time; the appetite grows with feeding, and the writer after a time will be unmoved by things that would have once made him shake like an aspen.

Mr. Caldwell's technical ability is quite unusual. He writes his stories almost as if he were writing music. He has set themes or motifs, which he repeats time and time again—there are few writers who use repetition to the same extent. He brings you with extraordinary delicacy and care up to a climax or anti-climax; he loves that sort of suspense you get in the movies when someone is about to be killed by gangsters. He has a peculiar style, bare, precise, about halfway between the conversational-commonplace and the naïve-literary—the latter element is almost chemically pure in such first-person stories as "The Cold Winter."

About half the stories in his present volume are sketches rather than stories; but certainly no one could think of saying that about such a story as "Kneel to the Rising Sun." Mr. Caldwell's people are frequently not people at all, but merely very much simplified response-systems. The easiest way of seeing what he lacks is to read Chekhov's stories about peasants. Nevertheless, such stories as "Kneel to the Rising Sun," "The Growing Season," and "A Day's Wooing," are stories well worth reading. "The Growing Season" is, in fact, one of the most extraordinarily ingenious stories I have ever seen. It is about the extremely bloody murder of something called "Fiddler." Fiddler is chained to a tree in Jesse English's yard; whether Fiddler is an imbecile, a dog, God himself couldn't say for certain, since never once is he called anything but Fiddler. Fiddler, "with his undeveloped legs," "rattling his chain," "crawling around the tree," getting up "as if to stand," Fiddler "making more noise than he had ever made before," is something the reader will hardly forget.

III

Most of the sketches in *Feliciana*—fourteen or fifteen out of nineteen—belong to the category of stories about the baby. Mr. Young tells you, with rather obtrusive precision and casualness, about cooks, servants, and cowboys he has known, Southern ladies of whom he approves, megalopolitan ones of whom he does not. It is hard to define exactly Mr. Young's attitude; as people tell you about the Grand Canyon, it must be seen to be believed. You can use, in characterizing it, the adjectives *patronizing, ironic, knowing;* it has in it something of the feeling of the more learned toward the less learned, of the cultured representative of a great tradition toward the representative of an inferior one. (The Greeks spoke of all other peoples as barbarians. It was an objective enough term; still, its use at about the beginning of the Christian era, as contrasted with its use at the time of the battle of Plataea, must have lacked good temper. Mr. Young's attitude has its affinities in the latter period.) An attitude of this sort is like omniscience: one mistake and the whole thing falls through. If the reader at any time finds himself considering Mr. Young's sensibility or moral values as, for the moment, inferior to his own, he will have difficulty in keeping the same awe for Mr. Young. This, perhaps, does happen; sometimes Mr. Young is snobbish, sometimes sentimental—sometimes he shows a disquieting admiration for moral perceptions or stylistic effects which do not seem to the reader admirable at all. Mr. Young is too often, as one of his characters says about himself, "myself strutting in my own procession."

Still, there are some stories in *Feliciana* to which most of this criticism does not apply. Mr. Young at his best is decidedly worth reading. He is really not a novelist, not a writer of short stories, but an essayist; the essay in this book called "Echoes at Livorno" is the best thing in it. Some of this essay will give the reader the most exquisite pleasure; and yet there are parts of it so disappointing one hardly knows what to say. The best moments of his style are graceful and beautiful; for instance: ". . . And sometimes in that silence, while he hung listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise carried far into his heart the voice of mountain torrents; or the visible scene entered unawares into his mind, with all its solemn imagery, its rocks, its woods, and its uncertain heaven received into the bosom of the steady lake." This sentence has some flaws, and fails badly at the end; still,

it is a fine one. Queerly enough, the best part of it reads almost like a paraphrase of Wordsworth; yet Mr. Young shows in another essay, some contempt for the English "nature poets," contrasting their "botany, profundity, pantheism, and rapture" with the "passionate humanity," the "classicism" of the Italians. If Mr. Young thinks so, it is a pity he does not copy them instead of Wordsworth.

As a matter of fact, all this merely shows how almost completely Latin Mr. Young is. There are innumerable references in the book to Spain, Mexico, France, Italy, even Turkey; in the whole book there is one reference to any northern European country: a sentence about "Teutonic foreigners." To another country of northern Europe, England, there is no reference at all.

IV

The Furys, by Mr. Hanley, is a book about working class people in a west of England port; it is done on a big scale and, except for one unfortunate exception, to be discussed below, it is a well-proportioned and sensible book. The texture of *The Furys* is terse, minute, witty; the author occasionally shows a sort of violence or extravagance that overflows into something resembling sur-realism (Grandfather re-living his boyhood, Professor Titmouse and his apparition). There is really a great deal in the book; instead of getting, by temperament or industry, a few favorite effects, and repeating them indefinitely, Mr. Hanley absolutely deluges you with the most varied ones, all quite justified by the plan of his book. The scenes range from funny to almost Apocalyptic ones. There are fifteen or sixteen characters who can be remembered with the utmost vividness; Mr. Fury, in particular, is an extraordinary success.

There is one big fault about *The Furys,* and anyone who has read *Boy,* Mr. Hanley's first novel, can see just what the fault is, and just what caused it. *Boy* is a powerful, but extremely limited, book—a *tour de force,* a book whose effects are all of one kind. It is a book about a boy who runs away to sea: the boy gets to Alexandria and dies, in a flood of meaningless and violent circumstances, especially horrible, the reader feels, because of the boy's failure to understand anything that is happening to him. Near the end there is a sort of nightmare of pure lust. *The Furys* is written on an entirely different scale, it is a more sensible, a better-balanced book; but

Mr. Hanley has given it an ending that would fit *Boy*, an ending that stops, but does not finish, *The Furys*.

V

Lucy Gayheart is very unpretentious, a quiet book on a small scale. The book depends on two accidental deaths—the death of Sebastian, the singer with whom Lucy Gayheart is in love, and Lucy's own death. This is a structural flaw; as de Maupassant said, people are killed every day by bricks falling from scaffoldings, but you mustn't write novels about them. Everyone knows the statement (with which, of course, one may disagree violently) that the best style is one which the reader does not notice at all. Miss Cather's style and general treatment almost satisfy this demand; or at least, one notices the faults of her style more than its virtues. This is not intended to be ironic; I mean that it is only by careful re-reading that one sees all the virtues of Miss Cather's style; her faults, on the other hand, are of a sort that our age particularly notices. Her style has very distinct limits, but inside these limits she writes with ease and grace. (The last sentence in Book II is the worst sentence in the book; it was probably just bad luck, one of those unaccountable lapses during which we forget our names, that kept Miss Cather satisfied with it.) Miss Cather's style and sensibility are not those of a first-rate writer; but she does not strain them, and there is nothing false about *Lucy Gayheart*.

You know Lucy Gayheart only in the way you might know yourself, if you were badly forgetful, and not very introspective. Sometimes things people say about you surprise you a good deal, and one or two of the things other people say about Lucy surprise you almost as much. Very few people know their own characteristic locutions, or turns of thought; you do not know Lucy's. She is made a rather general and lyrical figure throughout, and this prepares you for the way in which she is regarded near the book's end. In telling you, very beautifully and sensitively, about her footprints, Miss Cather compares them to those of "the herald Mercury"; and Miss Cather has written so gently and restrainedly, what she has said seems so just, that they have that much significance for you, too.

Miss Cather's treatment of Lucy's grief seems unsuccessful; she tells only the general things everybody knows, just the things she could have taken for granted. She writes of emotion better than of sensation; yet

she frequently describes an emotion so that you remember having felt the one she means, but decide that her description of it is not good enough. I do not say that Miss Cather is rather romantic and sentimental, and that she pays no attention to economics and sociology. Mr. Hanley is very much interested in the economic implications of *his* story, and it is a good story; but there is no reason to hold him up to Miss Cather and say, "Go thou and do likewise."

Miss Cather is especially good in the cultural levels she gives to her characters in the speeches she has them say; there is no mistake to hurt your confidence in her. Her attitude toward music, her great singer, are very convincing and satisfying. Besides Miss Cather knows so much about writing; you do not need to look at the list of "other books by this author" to realize that she has written a great many books, and learned a great deal while she was writing them. Miss Cather is somehow so sympathetic, and so interesting, that *Lucy Gayheart* demands both liking and respect. *Lucy Gayheart* is not an "important" book at all; but surely, if it affects one so it has enough of virtue.

VI

A Preface to Maturity is what is commonly known as an "autobiographical first novel." Miss Brousseau is more interesting when she writes about other people than when she tells about her own adjustments to, and conclusions about, life; she is more often deceived by herself than by her fellows. Perhaps it had better be said that D. H. Lawrence is not included among her fellows—she seems to have swallowed Lawrence, hook, line, and sinker. Her love scenes, as a result, have a sort of cheerful absurdity that recommends them to the reader; the characters analyze their emotions at inordinate length, and you feel that it is only a lack of proper facilities (and a certain antipathy to science) that keeps them from recording their blood-pressure at the same time. The book is overwritten at times. On the other hand, Miss Brousseau's observation is sometimes unusually acute; one feels, then, that she has had no interest in either substantiating or discrediting her presuppositions, and has said what she really saw, what the world and her integrity forced her to say. What the book mainly needs is more experience in writing and a different attitude toward writing. If Miss

Brousseau were forced to write about animals or automata, and could not depend so much upon ideas, ideals, sentimentality, whole sheets of emotion, if she would once stop and ask herself, "What good are all these purple patches, these carefully written rhapsodies?" she might write a great deal better second book.

Sometimes book advertisements are designed to interest a limited public; for instance, the announcement of a reprint of *Black Beauty* will be accompanied by the information that "This is a book no horse-lover can afford to miss." The advertisements of *We Too Are Drifting* have been rather of this sort. After all, it is only a pleasant, if unimportant, book. Miss Wilhelm has definite notions of economy and structure, and her book makes very easy reading. This story of three women in love has the extrinsic charm lent by a novel situation; perhaps it seems both more original and more interesting than it actually is. It is certainly a very innocent and idealistic book. A great many things are beautiful and noble and strange, and Miss Wilhelm tells you so bluntly. If it were only as easy as that! Her characters, like Hemingway's, are *noble*. I can recall some characters in literature who I though were virtuous in the highest sense—Prince Myshkin, for instance—but none of them was ever *noble*.

Miss Wilhelm's artists *qua* artists are not very convincing; bad ones probably talk like that, but good ones at least ought not to. (Miss Wilhelm might look at the conversations in Vollard's life of Degas.) The accidental death of the sculptor seems unnecessary. As far as her style is concerned, it is only necessary to quote a sentence, and let the reader decide for himself by whom Miss Wilhelm is influenced: "The sun was bright and hot but there was wind off the sea and there was smooth bright green grass and dark clotted trees and the white sheep clotted and the blue sky with white wreaths and the smooth road curving."

Miss Slesinger's *Time: The Present* is a collection of magazine short stories, most of which are hardly worth reprinting. The stories are generally choppy, jumbled, and derivative; Miss Slesinger is easily influenced by contemporary writers, and both her mechanisms and effects are familiar. "On Learning That Her Second Husband Has Taken His First Love," for instance, reads like a schoolgirl's parody of Dorothy Parker; to Miss

Parker's peculiar qualities it adds a sentimentality and self-absorption all its own. Miss Slesinger's irony is essentially aimless, since her own attitude and sensibility impress the reader as very little superior to those of the characters she satirizes. A humorist has always to be funny; the satirist, faced with the like necessity of always attacking something, is often either barbarous or dull. Miss Slesinger is sometimes tedious, and sometimes manifiests a peculiar feminine brutality.

The work is very uneven, in regard to both sentiment and merit. You can find in it sentimental bits, disgusting bits, witty bits—almost anything you please. The publishers have put brightly colored coarse paper inserts between the stories, and have printed the titles of the stories on these; it makes quite an ugly book.

Time Out of Mind is an ingenuous story about a proud Maine family, the Fortunes, whose son becomes, in spite of his father's opposition, a great composer. He is truly loved, not by his selfish wife and sister, but by the poor girl who writes the story to soothe her age. He comes to a tragic end, and she is accused of his death; Miss Field solves the problem of the presentation of her heroine's trial by quoting from the local newspaper—the quotation, incidentally, occupies eleven pages of small type. On a certain level, *Time Out of Mind* is quite a good story; but this level is surprisingly low. The book is full of rather pretty and idealistic sayings about life and art and love. The author has the habit of quoting from the Old Testament, and her prose suffers from the comparison.

Anthropologists periodically go off to Africa or the South Seas, to return a year or two later with a substantial monograph on the sexual life of the natives. Mr. Holden has had the happy inspiration of not bothering with Africa at all; his book, *Chance Has a Whip,* might very well be called *The Sexual Life of the American Business Man.* Insofar as serious writing is concerned, Mr. Holden is a thorough amateur. His hero has a very happy love affair; on the other hand, he almost dies of a burst appendix, his daughter commits suicide, he accidentally kills one of his wife's former lovers, and is accidentally killed by gangsters escaping from prison. An occasional scene or simile is vivid enough—the story as a whole is irrelevant.

R. E. LEE

Andrew Nelson Lytle

MANY YEARS must pass before the general history of the great war of the sixties is written, before ultimate judgment may assess the relative value of the leading performers; even before the meaning of victory and defeat can be taken. Already much work has been done on the campaigns in the east, but this present biography* of the Confederacy's first general will stand for a long while as the last word on his military performance. And this word has a larger implication than the narrative of other army commanders. The definitive lives of Lee and Jackson, but especially of Lee, mark the final record of Southern defense in the east. And because of the great strength of his name and his genius for victory, in the darkest hours of the last months, Lee defined Confederate resistance for the Southern nation. This consideration gives Freeman's biography special importance and justifies its length. He has spent nineteen years in gathering material and putting it together. Factually it is complete. Other material will undoubtedly be uncovered; but one cannot believe that it will question the finality of Freeman's selection. The four volumes of over two thousand pages have been beautifully and expensively presented. Illustrations are liberally inserted; and for the first time there are sufficient maps, intelligently placed, which make it easy to visualize the army's movements in campaign and battle.

Any life of Lee which proposes to be definitive must of necessity lay great and special demands upon the author's critical imagination. From

* *R. E. Lee*, by Douglas Southall Freeman. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 4 vols. $3.75 each.

the length of this narrative and the time taken in its preparation, one may safely assume that the author has set himself to his task with such a design in view. He begins by going very fully into Lee's early life, showing racial traits, social inheritances, his mother's training, the tragic end to his father's career. These sections are conventionally done; and although they assemble fresh incidents of his youth and early manhood, the incidents do not expose much additional knowledge of his character. He is a Christian gentleman with great energy and capacity, thrifty, practised in self-denial, dependent upon family life, and suffering at times from frustration due to the slow promotion of army life. A great deal is said about his ancestry and the distinguished station occupied by his contemporary connections. This does much to place him in the mind of the reader; but, in the light of this society's destruction, it could have been more imaginatively handled. When times were stricter, as in the eighteenth century, it was not necessary for the biographer of a great soldier to explain the society from which he had sprung or his particular place in it, because the reader, being a part of that society, intuitively understood its nature, its divisions and institutions. In that time, when a political quarrel was settled by war, nothing was changed fundamentally. But with Lee it was different. He was called on to defend the society itself which produced him and the life he loved, a thing which he seems never to have understood. He conducted his campaigns largely in the eighteenth century fashion as he had seen war conducted in Mexico. This fact gives to the tragedy of his life a flavor of irony which the author has singularly missed.

But the moment the biography becomes military narrative the tone of the writing and the interpretation become sure and skillful. The style takes a direction which only the most superior knowledge and understanding of the arts of war can give. No matter how difficult the manoeuvre or how confusing the tactical dispositions, there is always the greatest clarity of exposition, from the conclusions reached by the commander from the intelligence reports to the final shock of brigades on the field. Freeman understands the dramatic power of restraint, and the high quality of the prose testifies to his effective use of understatement. Throughout, he combines in the most adroit manner exciting description with the analysis of elements which have brought about the particular military conclusion, so

that the reader's judgment is assisted in the most useful way. His chief and most dramatic device is what he terms the "fog of war." The method proposes to show only what was in Lee's mind at a given moment; how he reasoned in this fog and came to his conclusions. This allows for a truer judgment of his ability as a commander, and disputes in the most telling way critics who, in the knowledge of after events, have blamed him for decisions he was forced to make while laboring in the "fog." The one valid criticism to the exclusive use of this method is the limited information it gives to the reader. To get the full effect the reader needs to know the strength and dispositions of the opposing army, what was going on in Lee's army which Lee did not know, and something of those influences which led the enemy into miscalculations and blunders. Often Freeman, in the summation at the end of chapters or in footnotes, gives this additional information; but at times he so orders it that the reader finds himself wandering in a fog of his own which borders on obscurity.

But the method is a valuable and permanent contribution to military biography, a contribution which must greatly improve it. It is most successful in Scott's march on Mexico City, for here Lee is not a commander but an officer of the staff, operating for the most part on detached reconnaissance duty. The approach, therefore, to any situation is concrete and personal: Lee performing in dangerous positions, making hazardous scouts; or sustaining terrific hardships, such as crossing the *pedregal* in foul weather, on a black night, to carry information that would help assure victory. During this entire campaign he proved the perfect subordinate, and the thorough way in which his part is displayed serves as a fine introduction to him in the familiar rôle as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Freeman keeps in mind this very fact, and while the description of the advance on Mexico City is one of the best things in the book, remaining with the reader as the equal to the best which follows, he is not allowed to forget that Mexico was the laboratory where Lee learned the rules of combat. For there he studied and was later to adopt Scott's theory of high command. The commanding general's function, according to Scott, is to plan the general operation, acquaint the corps commanders with the plan, and see that their troops are brought to the proper places at the proper

time. Here his duties cease. After a battle is joined, it is not the commander's function to fight it in detail. Since the too rigid practice of this theory has been considered as Lee's greatest fault as a general, the Mexican War was destined to have a profound influence upon the American concept of society.

But his military education did not end with this. It was advanced by six other lessons: (1) audacity; (2) the value of working with a trained staff; (3) the relation of careful reconnaissance to sound strategy; (4) the advantage of flanking movements; (5) the relation of communications to strategy—how an army, as Scott's did, may abandon its line of supply and live off the country; (6) the value of fortification, an art very little developed at that time in open warfare. In addition to these things, he saw the necessity for the commander to remain on good terms with his lieutenants. Scott's quarrels with his division heads, after the entry into Mexico City, almost wrecked the army. This example became such a warning to Lee that he went to the other extreme, often to the detriment of the cause. To sum up—at the close of hostilities Lee had observed an army under all conditions but that of retreat. A practical knowledge of cavalry and tactics were also missing from his military education. These lessons had to wait for more desperate days.

It has been the common belief that his genius was constant from beginning to end; that his powers were at times intuitive, if not actually metaphysical. The memoirs of one of his staff officers state as much. But another school, arguing from doctrinaire rules of war, misunderstanding the special nature of the American issue, has accused him of rashness. The peculiar value of Freeman's narrative lies in its demonstration of Lee's growth as a soldier, in its insight into, and instruction with regard to, the obstacles and limitations imposed upon his decisions at every vital moment of manoeuvre and battle, from the time he is charged with the mobilization of the Virginia forces to the bitter resolution to surrender his army. Always he was forced to take the second-best way of doing things, either because of the failure of the commissary, when a well-fed and well-equipped army might have made victories decisive; or because of the lack of forage for his animals; or because of the sloth and incapacity of his officers, even their insubordination (Longstreet at Gettysburg; Field in the Wilderness);

or because of more general situations having to do with the nature of the general defense.

We watch through the four years of war his great mind work: the cohesion of intellect, character, and physical endurance, united by a sensibility which gives to every thought and action a common genesis. We watch it analyzing intelligence reports until the purpose of the enemy seems clear. And once he has made up his mind the decision for action is quick and irrevocable. If it is to manoeuvre, the orders he gives for marching are clear and specific. This quality of his orders and not the speed of the march moved his brigades to the proper place at the proper time, just as the order to engage rested upon a confident synthesis of all the elements which denied any alternative. It was this functioning of a complete man of great power which justified the confidence of his army and turned it into a fighting machine; which warranted a boldness that in lesser men would have been mere rashness; which turned the blunders or inadequacies of his subordinates into Confederate victories; and which helps, finally, explain the ultimate defeat of the man and the cause he defended so well—for the flaw in the character of a person of such near-perfection must be commensurate with his virtues.

In reading military history it is very hard to find a writer who understands how campaigning, losses in battle, and other causes are continually operating to change the nature of an army. But in this quality of narrative Freeman excels. The variable temper of the Army of Northern Virginia, influencing Lee and influenced by him, is handled in the most thorough way, until its special character before every battle helps define the outcome. For example, during the Seven Days the army was a loose agglomeration of regiments, at best six semi-independent commands, ordered upon faulty maps, and under the control of a leader who had taken charge after the campaign was under way. These particular movements of troops are the most difficult of the war to clarify and bring alive; yet it is here that the author's technique proves most successful. In the narrative proper, in footnotes and appendices, he sets forth step by step why Lee failed to crush McClellan, although he was able to bring relief to Richmond. Never once was his grand strategy realized tactically. Always each battle was fought by a part of the army with excessive loss because the turning movements

never reached the desired point at the desired time. Freeman sets forth the probable reasons in a clear argument, and he is always careful to withhold a positive judgment when the nature of the evidence is conflicting.

After this campaign Lee welded the divisions into effective combat units. The men had already shown their superior fighting abilities; but for the most part the general officers, with certain exceptions, displayed serious shortcomings. With a fine union of decision and tact—he had already won the confidence of all arms—Lee quickly undertook its reorganization. Very quietly he shelved the incompetent generals and, so gradually that it was not noticed, shifted troops from those officers who had not distinguished themselves to more skillful commanders. Building up the staff, he combined the divisions into two corps, making the army's efficiency depend upon three men: Longstreet, Jackson, and Stuart. This was the reorganization which would make both Lee and his army famous—Jackson, the combat wing; Longstreet, the support; and Stuart, the intelligence.

Having once taken their measure, he would plan his marches and battles upon his knowledge of their joint capacity; and the soundness of his judgment was always borne out by their actions. Stuart never brought him a piece of false information; Longstreet, until circumstances called upon him to play a part for which he was unfitted, once he got into action, slow though he was, showed superb tactical sense. It was not by accident that Lee pitched his tent near this general's headquarters. And Jackson, the spearhead of the army, was the perfect instrument to carry out his chief's daring resolutions. From the beginning there was a perfect understanding between the two men. Lee's orders to Jackson were terse and professional. He knew there was no need for the diplomatic approach which he used with certain of his citizen generals. Jackson often disagreed about plans; but if he was overruled, he would make Lee's plan his own and carry it out as he alone could do it. He is reported as saying after the Seven Days that he would follow Lee blindfolded, which has a curious corollary, for Lee at that time seems to have doubted Jackson's willingness to serve under another. Lee, daring in conception; Jackson, daring and deadly in execution . . . from such a marriage of genius sprang the triumphs of Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and the supreme trial of their spiritual union, Chancellorsville. The most stirring scene in the four

long books is their last conference together, when Lee decides to divide his small army (Longstreet's corps is absent in North Carolina) and send Jackson with a force around Hooker's flank. It is the only way by which the Confederates may retain the offensive. "What do you propose to make this movement with?" asked Lee. "With my whole corps," answered Jackson. This was Jackson's own conception, writes Freeman; his major contribution to the campaign. He would not attempt a simple turning movement that would leave an opening for a general assault. Lee had not expected this, for it would leave him only two divisions to face an enemy who might easily have 50,000 men in his front. Boldness matched boldness. He replied calmly, "Go on." "Such an executive officer," said Lee some days after he had watched Jackson disappear into the forest for the last time, "the sun never shone on. I have but to show him my design, and I know that if it can be done, it will be done. No need for me to send or watch him. Straight as the needle to the pole he advanced to the execution of my purpose."

The time from the Seven Days through Chancellorsville marks the great period of Lee's generalship and the army's highest performance; and it was Jackson who was the qualifying element. After his death the nature of the army changed and Lee's generalship was modified. Before, when the army had to undergo reorganization, the refitting and substitutions took place according to the structure assumed after the Seven Days. And the test of this structure was Sharpsburg. On that field the army showed it could stand on the defensive, and Lee showed he could handle troops in actual combat. In the stress of the battle there he was forced to direct the tactical dispositions, and they were done so well that every movement was exactly timed to meet the emergency, just as, strategically, the divisions reunited on the field in time to prevent disaster. The one criticism Freeman makes of Lee is of his failure to estimate the fatigue of the army after Second Manassas. Straggling on the way to Maryland had sadly reduced its strength. But Lee had come a long way from his first battle. He no longer attempted grand movements. He satisfied himself with simple flank attacks and quick marches to the rear; and he had become a master at patching up the combat units after the battle's damage. At no time until the end of the War was the morale of the army so low as after Sharpsburg; yet by careful rebuilding, rest, food, and refitting, it was brought to the high

efficiency of Fredericksburg, the Confederacy's high noon, and Chancellorsville, the beginning of the decline.

When Lee heard of Jackson's fall, his calm face was overcast with anguish; and his voice choked with emotion as he dictated a reply to that soldier's message, telling him the victory was his. When it was learned that the doctor had given up hope, Lee knelt in prayer and, as Freeman says, "went down spiritually to the brook of Jabbok and, like Jacob, wrestled with the angel." He would not believe that Jackson would die, and who can say that in his refusal to accept the inevitable was not a dread of ultimate defeat as well as personal grief, for no one knew better than Lee that Jackson's place would not be filled. Freeman closes the second book with the following paragraph. It is worth quoting, as its splendid prose brings to an end his brilliant handling of the army's first phase. . ."There was a stir outside the tent, a moment of hesitation, and then some one brought in a bit of folded paper. It contained the brief and dreadful news. In the little cottage at Guiney's, Jackson had roused from his restless sleep and had struggled to speak. His mind had been wandering far—who knows how far?—but with an effort, in his even, low voice, he had said: 'Let us pass over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees.' And then, as so often on marches into the unknown, he had led the way." As Lee read the note, in his distress he too must have asked that same question—who now would lead the way?

He answered it by dividing the Second Corps into two segments, placing Ewell over the reduced Second, and Hill over a new Third Corps. The entire reorganization of the army was the most drastic ever undertaken; and although Lee did the best he could in the exigencies of the War (Confederate fortunes in the west were desperate), Freeman states that the army was back where it had been before the Seven Days. What it could do without Jackson was unknown. But the Pennsylvania campaign must be undertaken with the least delay to relieve the pressure on Vicksburg, before the officers and men would be able to accustom themselves to their new relationships. There were two untried corps commanders, the character of one of these, Ewell, being unknown to Lee; a third of the divisions under new leaders; one corps with two new divisions; seven freshly promoted brigadiers; six infantry brigades commanded by senior colonels; a third

of the cavalry directed by officers who had not previously served with the army; and the most experienced corps commander, Longstreet, inflated with self-importance and believing he controlled his commander's mind. There was, to offset these disadvantages, the high morale of the troops; and there was Lee. But even Lee without Jackson was an unknown quantity. It was the fate of the Confederacy that such conditions prevailed in the Army of Northern Virginia on the eve of its most critical battle. The reorganization after Chancellorsville, states Freeman, explains Gettysburg.

Gettysburg was a Confederate reverse because Lee failed, as at the Seven Days, to get any coördination in his attacks. On the first day Ewell failed to rise to his new responsibility. The discretion Lee always gave his corps commanders confused Ewell, who had been accustomed to Jackson's explicit orders. But equally, Lee failed to adjust his habits to get the best out of Ewell; therefore, the success on the first day was only partial. When it became apparent that Ewell would do no more, Lee's military sense told him his line ought to be shortened by drawing in on Seminary ridge; but when Ewell protested, he surrendered his judgment and acquiesced in the fishhook formation. Freeman condones this decision, but Lee violated his own theory of the commander's function. It is the general's duty to make the plan, the subordinate's to carry it out. On the second day things drifted badly. Lee gave only one positive order, and that was to Longstreet to attack at eleven o'clock. He did not stay to see it executed, although he was fully aware of his most capable lieutenant's sullen behavior, his passive resistance to the offensive, which was Lee's announced plan of action. Freeman goes so far as to say that the army was without a commander on the second day. On the third day it was the same thing, except that Longstreet became openly insubordinate. Stuart's absence partly exonerates Lee for his lack of control, for he was in the dark as to the enemy's strength and position; and under such circumstances his action could not have the drive which accurate information would have given it; but it does not completely excuse him, and he did not ask to be excused, for his failure, once he had settled on a plan, to have it executed. Freeman lays the principal blame upon Longstreet; but finally, Lee cannot be absolved. There is a difference between leaving the tactical management to the corps commander when he is obedi-

ent and when he is insubordinate. It was Lee's plain duty to force Longstreet to obey him, or to turn the corps over to somebody who would. Freeman concludes that Lee had to put up with his subordinate's behaviour, because he was his most skilled commander; but, as it turned out, Longstreet did no actual commanding. He merely stood in the way to block whatever chance there was of success for Pickett's thrust. The author further explains Lee's action on the grounds of his overconfidence in the butternut ranks. This may partly interpret the reasons, but it does not excuse his violation on those three days of his conception of the commander's business: he failed to get the troops into position at the proper time; he allowed his subordinates to interfere with his plan of battle; and he failed to see that the battle was joined when ordered.

Afterwards, in the Wilderness, in the shifts to the right at Cold Harbor, and finally, in the trenches at Petersburg, Lee showed that he had found out what a change Jackson's death had wrought in the army. More and more he assumed direct responsibility. It took the battle of Gettysburg to make him aware of what he must expect of himself under the new conditions. It was the South's misfortune that it had to be that particular battle, for afterwards his power was seen at its fullest. And Freeman's treatment retains its convincing analysis of the army's defensive operations. He dismisses Longstreet's contention that, saving his wound, he would have pushed his advantage in the Wilderness flank attack to victory, by demonstrating that the enemy had been pushed as far as circumstances allowed when the bullet struck. When Grant finally slipped to the south of the James, the author defends Lee's surprise by showing in detail how little exact information Beauregard furnished, and how Lee's care and prudence did not allow him to move until he was sure of the enemy's intentions.

In the preface and in the short summation at the end the author states that there is nothing in Lee's life to interpret. We are told that he was a simple Christian gentleman. That he was a Christian gentleman of the old school the most disputatious would not deny; but that he was a simple man seems far from the truth. An action may be simple and direct but have the most complex implications. Lee's code was strict. It extended into all his relationships, his duty to himself, to his family, to the army, to the Confederacy and its civil authority. It was complete as no code can be today.

But this completeness does not prohibit the necessity for interpretation. Indeed, every author, whether he recognizes it or not, interprets his protagonist by writing about him. The arrangement of his material, his constant selection and analysis, form opinion as assuredly by implication as by statement. The failure to recognize this is to make a specific interpretation often masquerade as something else.

This, perhaps, has led the author to ignore the full relationship between two phases of Lee's conduct: his dealings with the civil authority and his attitude after Appomattox. The first is important because it bound Lee's army to a fixed object, Richmond. The defense of Richmond should have been a secondary object. The aim of the war was to bring about Southern independence. Lee is excused on the ground of his belief in the subordination of the military to the civil government. In a recognized nation this is a sound attitude; but, actually, since the Confederacy assumed the rôle of revolution, there was no civil authority until it had been established by the armies in the field. Lee's relationship, therefore, could not be to the civil authorities of a revolutionary government what it had been to the old United States. Did Lee recognize this changed relation? If he did not, was he not unfit for the fullest performance of the greatest military leader of a revolution? The consideration of this matter cannot be dismissed in the definitive life of the gentleman. To state, as the author does, that Lee felt the military must subordinate itself to the civil, in the light of the situation, begs the question. His model, Washington, certainly did not view the question in the same light.

Most of the last book is taken up with the final, what some may consider the significant, phase in this great man's life. But the treatment here does not match the skill with which the war period has been handled. It is diffuse and uncertain. It accumulates fresh incidents; it goes into great detail about the management of Washington College; it treats extensively the changing curriculum and the growing endowment of the college; it takes Lee to the springs, on visits to his kin and admirers. Lee in all this activity has been interpreted as the guide to Southern salvation. This salvation is to be achieved by building up the character of Southern youth; by accepting the decision of battle through the faithful adherence to the terms of surrender with the hope that, by the mercy of God, things will

come all right in the end. This is a valid interpretation—it has been the common one—but it is inadequate. The mercy of God did not bring independence. Nor was the war over. One phase of it was done, but the old wounds were kept open by the Reconstruction policy and the worst form of guerilla warfare. The avowed purpose of this policy, which broke the terms at Appomattox and Goldsboro, was the destruction of Southern civilization. Did Lee not see that the training of a few thousand students at Washington college was a futile thing, if their civilization was to be wrecked? And what was submission but the worst form of slavery? Fortunately the leadership changed to the middle South, to those who led the Ku Klux Klan, that society which made survival possible. If Lee did not understand the implications of the policy of the Northern radicals, who were the government, his nobility conceals a serious flaw.

It is just this attitude of Lee during the days of peace that needs interpretation, and it is the lack of interpretation in the present biography that fails to explain his acceptance of personal defeat. It is hard to believe, as Freeman would have us, that this acceptance was passive. His "I had rather face a thousand deaths than meet General Grant"; the furious pacing under the apple tree after surrender; the partial withdrawal from life; the refusal to discuss the battles; his distrust of politicians; the coldness his old officers noticed on occasion; his simple statement to Captain White on one of their rides, *apropos* of nothing, that if Jackson had been at Gettysburg, he would have won the battle; his rapid transition from maturity to old age—do not all these things point to a terrific struggle to maintain his mask? Do they not show that resignation was not in his heart? All the time he must have been fighting again the battles and questioning his actions. And must he not have tried to find the answer to his failure in a comparison of his career with that of his father—careers so different but both ending in defeat? Must he not have asked himself how virtue can fail or did he know how the noble man may be pursued by Fate and overthrown? Or did the flaw lie deeper, somewhere behind that irreproachable mask, in the refusal to demean his personal code to save the cause?

These questions are not proposed in this work; but they must be considered before the biography of Lee can be said, in all respects, to be definitive.

ENGLAND

Herbert Agar

ENGLISH HISTORY has been largely rewritten during the last fifteen years. The historians used to tell a pretty tale of freedom slowly broadening down. According to that tale the revolutions of the seventeenth century were decisive victories for human liberty; the development of responsible cabinet government in the eighteenth century was a consolidation of the position that had been gained; the Reform Bills of the nineteenth century marked the final triumph. The story was soothing, and it seemed to make sense. Recently, however, historians began to notice a rather serious flaw in the argument—namely, that at the beginning of this long progress England seems to have been more free, more happy, and more secure morally than she was at the end. On the other hand, she was clearly more wealthy at the end than at the beginning, and this seemed to suggest that in the search for wealth England may have fallen into moral and political errors which the Whig historians of the nineteenth century had not bothered to mention. With this thought in mind, students have recently begun to review the whole tangled story, and there is little of the Whig mythology which they have left untouched.

The new history has not yet reached the text-books or the popular outlines. One of its first appearances in a book covering the whole field and written for the general public is in Mr. Douglas Jerrold's *England*.* In this brief work, the first hundred and fifty pages are a sketch of English history, the last ninety pages are a survey of England's contemporary problems.

* London, 1935.

Into this space Mr. Jerrold has compressed a picture of the past which is both fascinating and true, and a picture of the present which raises every important question facing the Western World. I wish to discuss the latter aspect of the book: the questions which are raised throughout, the noble view of the political function which is maintained.

The failure of Great Britain to make her enormous growth in wealth yield a growth in human happiness or goodness or dignity is the most important theme in this book. A reason for this failure, according to Mr. Jerrold, is that from the seventeenth century to the present time, and especially in the nineteenth century, England has tended more and more to subordinate politics to economics. This means that fundamental questions of principle are subordinated to the economic problem of how to obtain, for the immediate future, the most wealth. It means that the institutions on which our Christian world is based, such as the family and the church, are not allowed to interfere with the demands of trade or of finance. It means, above all, that there can be no steady purpose to government, that there can be no statesmanship, only party politics.

"An inflexible purpose," writes Mr. Jerrold, "is the secret of government, and a Government which is afraid to oppress the strong will never discharge its obligation to protect the weak; the appetite of the few for power warring against the cry of the many for justice is the constant refrain of political history. A society which lacks clear and defined principles which enable it to determine the requirements of justice in each contingency, is one which will have no armour against the oppression of force." It is not possible for a society to have clear and defined principles if it looks to economics for guidance. Economics can provide the statesman with information as to what can or cannot be done under given conditions; but the question of what ought to be done lies outside the realm of economics. What form of society is wanted; what form of life is held conducive to the well-being of man: these are the problems of statesmanship. These are the problems which must be solved before politics can rise above a low cunning. These problems cannot even be dealt with by the science of economics. But if they are not dealt with, if they are merely neglected (as they were neglected in nineteenth century England), the state drifts guideless and moral-less. And the fate toward which it drifts is economic determinism. If the national

leaders lack the strength of will to choose a course, the course will be chosen for them by the natural operations of greed. Those things will be done which tend to make the rich richer, irrespective of whether they also tend to deny the plain man justice and dignity and a fair chance to attain moral stability. A society which is economically determined is a society which has no worthy purpose. It is for this reason, as Mr. Jerrold says, that "history affords no instance of a nation which subordinates politics to economics maintaining its postition as a great power."

Describing the rebellion which put James II off his throne, Mr. Jerrold points out that the English people were strangely indifferent:

> The Whig champions of liberty saw their chance of office and at once prepared armed rebellion. Their Tory countrymen, tired of the plots and counterplots which had marred twenty-eight years of prosperity, stood by and gave no sign. "We are the People of England; we have not spoken yet."
>
> We may wonder whether, between 1688 and 1832, they regretted their silence. For the inglorious rebellion opened a fateful period, during which encroachments on the freedom and dignity of men were so habitually ignored in the storm of wars that by the opening of Victoria's reign England had become the Two Nations described in Disraeli's novel. It was not so in 1688. Wages then were far higher than they are today, cottage industries were the basis of the economic order, and the completely landless labourer was still the exception rather than the rule. 180,000 families, a sixth of the entire population, were yeoman farmers; and of the 2,500,000 of agricultural labourers and their families, the majority had some small status, if only the right of common grazing. Of the town dwellers, about a million and a half in all, the overwhelming majority were free men economically. It was the golden age of English labour and English agriculture, with wheat at 50 shillings a quarter and the value of the pound sterling three and a half times what it is today. It was only Joint Stock Enterprise in overseas trade that provided financial adventurers with opportunities in the seventeenth century and provided a foretaste of what might ensue. For here were the deep foundations laid of big city fortunes, buttressed by sea power, maintained by conquests, which won markets

for manufactures and developed those sources of raw material which, when the age of steam should come, were to make England the richest and the least egalitarian country in the world.

At the end of the seventeenth century, the fatal decision was already being made, the decision to let economic development take its course uncontrolled by any moral purpose to preserve justice and dignity of life for the plain man. When, after the industrial revolution and the Napoleonic wars, England had to adjust herself to the modern world, she did it in terms of what was best for money rather than of what was best for man.

> The Liberals [writes Mr. Jerrold] proposed . . . an economic order which had an imposing appearance of efficiency, but which lacked all the essentials, because within its structure was no place where plain men could walk with dignity, and within the repertory of its philosophy no obligations which could inspire humility in the proud, set bounds to deceptive speculation or impose justice on the strong . . . . And so we come to the threshold of our own age and the opening of controversies still urgent. The men of property had destroyed Catholicism, destroyed the popular monarchy, flirted with, but finally defeated Calvinism, fought a desperate battle with the forces of revolution, to find themselves, at the dawn of the modern age, alone with their bankers. They had destroyed the throne and the altar and put in their place nothing but themselves.

It was now that the abandonment of moral aims, the abandonment of high politics, had its disastrous effect:

> The need of the manufacturers was economic freedom; the cry of the people was for social justice. Economic freedom was conceded . . . The Free Trade system was the logical consequence of the impact of the ideas of the French Revolution on a practical nation disinclined to speculation and uninterested in politics. The nineteenth century inherited from Burke the doctrine of an organic society and from the French Encyclopaedists the doctrine of man's natural virtue. The only possible deduction was that the release of economic forces from the control of politicians would result in the development and utilization of national resources to the utmost possible extent and in the wisest possible manner. Because the first part of this deduction

was true, England flourished exceedingly. Because the second part of it is wholly false, many Englishmen suffered greatly as the price of the nation's prosperity. The free play of economic forces will invariably tend to a rich but never to a good society.

Victorian England led the world in the development of modern finance and in the application of the machine to the production of wealth. Unhappily it did not lead the world (it did not even seek to lead itself) in the far harder task of subduing finance and the machine to the moral needs of man.

> A new tradition was coming into being [writes Mr. Jerrold]. It was for trade, not for men, that divine Providence had decreed Freedom. England had ceased to be the mother of Englishmen. She had discovered a higher destiny as a coal producing island at the mouth of the Rhine . . . The system dignified with the name of patriot, and credited with the virtues of prudence, thrift and the supreme Victorian merit of foresight the man who bought English labour cheap, sold it dear, and invested his profits in industrializing our future competitors in the world's markets, whose goods, incidentally, we should be forced to take ourselves if we were to receive the interest on our loans. The patriotism and the virtues were alike genuine; the foresight was not. The Victorians imposed upon their contemporaries as hard-headed and ruthless: we know them today for sentimentalists, heroically sacrificing comfort, ease and the pleasures of benevolence to the dictates of a fallacious system of economics, thanks to which those nations whose railways we built, whose operatives we trained, and whose machinery we manufactured are engaged today in capturing our trade and ridiculing our philosophies.

This view of modern English history needs but to be stated for an American to see how applicable it is to our own problems. It took England three centuries to lose her direction, to subordinate her political genius to the accidents of economics. America, with far greater natural advantages but far less political capacity, has inflicted on herself the same injuries in seventy-five years.

All over the world today, on the continent of Europe as well as in England and in the United States, there is a turn of opinion away from this unworthy loss of moral aim. There is a demand that high politics again

assume its rightful place, that the economic machinery of society be made to serve man, and that man be pictured in prouder terms than as a mere wealth-producing animal. The great battle of our age is between the people who voice this moral demand and the people who believe that there is no law but economic law. Only if the right side wins this battle can our civilization survive. Mr. Jerrold believes, rightly I think, that if we organize the fight and push it steadily we will find on our side

> the majority of free men and women aiming at a society in which the production and consumption of goods is ruthlessly subordinated to the needs of the social order, who believe that the basis of enjoyment is not use but ownership; who realize that liberty and the maximum of economic efficiency are not necessarily compatible, and who without hesitation prefer the way of liberty because they realize that it is in creative activity and not in the consumption of goods or the enjoyment of leisure that man fulfills his destiny by fulfilling the demands of his nature.
>
> It will be observed that both the paths before us require and demand a plan. The first demands an economic plan to destroy the political basis of modern society, which is incompatible with quantitative efficiency. The second demands a plan to restore and maintain the social institutions necessary to freedom, which have been found increasingly incompatible with the trend of modern business organization.

I have touched on only one aspect of this astonishingly rich book. Mr. Jerrold's *England* should be read by all Americans who are interested in the world-problems among which our own nation is floundering, and especially by all Americans who feel that the great affirmations of Christianity have not become outmoded as a result of the work of Adam Smith, or of Karl Marx, or even of Mr. Henry Ford. It is to be hoped that the book will soon appear in an American edition.

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